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HMRC company car data

Numbers in decline but experts predict revival of interest

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THE BIG PICTURE

We've taken an upbeat view on the latest HMRC benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax figures, which show that the number of company car drivers has fallen for the fourth consecutive year and now sits at 800,000 (see pages 4-5).

While that's a significant drop from 2015/16's 960,000, there is much to be optimistic about. Leasing companies are reporting strong demand for both traditional leases and salary sacrifice; organisations are seeing some cash takers return to car schemes, attracted by low BIK on electric vehicles; and there's a heightened need for personal mobility in the face of Covid-aggravated concerns about travelling on public transport.

Are we about to see a reversal of fortunes for the humble company car? The likes of Hitachi and BMW certainly think so, reporting a surge in interest.

Hitachi goes so far as to bullishly forecast a return to one million company car drivers within three years (see page 6).

BMW corporate sales boss Rob East is seeing cash takers return to cars and huge demand for salary sacrifice schemes among fleet customers. He anticipates industry growth for at least the next four years.

Much of this optimism hinges on stability around BIK tax rates for electric vehicles, currently at 1%, but due to rise to 2% next April until 2024/25.

The unanswered question is: What happens from 2025? Drivers ordering cars now who work for businesses with four-year replacement cycles do not know how much BIK they will pay in their final year. There is a pressing need for Government to give certainty or risk unsettling the market again, leading to another surge in opt outs. And, as we know, cash takers tend to spend the money on older, more polluting cars – hitting both the environment and tax revenues.

We also know that Treasury is facing a financial hole as car buyers – corporate and retail – switch to electric, decimating tax income from fuel duty, vehicle excise duty (VED) and BIK. Will it plug the gap by hiking the rates on electric cars or by completely overhauling the tax system?

The latter is most likely in some form of road-based charging as it encompasses both corporate and retail markets. But to develop a robust, thought-out, fair policy takes time to develop and consult with the industry and public, and that's running out.

Let's hope we don't end up with yet another knee-jerk hotchpotch from the Government.

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

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Burning question:
What is your fondest memory of your time at school?

EDITORIAL

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IGNITION

COMMERCIAL FLEET

Revival of interest in the company car and sal/sac

Change sparked by upsurge in EVs and more attractive BIK tax regime

By Gareth Roberts

The company car market is alive and kicking, despite the latest HMRC statistics which show 70,000 fewer drivers – an 8% year-on-year decline.

The new provisional data, published by the Government last month, shows that there were 800,000 employees paying benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax in 2019/20 (fleetnews.co.uk, July 29).

The number of company cars has now fallen each year since 2015/16, when HMRC reported that 960,000 employees were receiving the benefit.

In 2016/17, the company car parc fell to 940,000, before dropping to 900,000 vehicles in 2017/18 and 870,000 in 2018/19.

However, despite HMRC figures suggesting a benefit on the wane, the fleet leasing industry is reporting a growing, ultra-low emission company car parc, with plug-in vehicles being adopted in record numbers.

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions suggests that interest is increasing at such a rate, thanks, in part, to the resurgence of salary sacrifice (sal/sac), the number of employees paying BIK on a company car could exceed one million by 2023/24 (see opinion column on page 8).

Zenith says orders have increased as the wider economy reopens, with year-on-year total car orders almost doubling in June, as drivers continue to be attracted to significant tax savings offered by company car and sal/sac car schemes.

Jon Smith, relationship director at Zenith, told *Fleet News:* "It is clear company cars, whether that's a salary sacrifice car scheme or a traditional company car scheme, have once again become an extremely cost-effective way for companies to provide mobility for their employees in a way that the same vehicle, leased privately via a cash allowance, cannot."

WLTP-FUELLED DECLINE

The decline in company car drivers reflected in the latest available BIK statistics is not surprising, given the confusion over future tax rates at the time.

Fleets and company car drivers were reporting increases in CO_2 emissions of up to 30% due to the Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP), which was introduced by the EU to better align reported CO_2 emissions measured in the laboratory with those achieved during real-world driving conditions.

WLTP testing had been required for all new models from September 2017, and all new car registrations since September 2018, with the new measure being adopted for company car tax and vehicle excise duty (VED) from April 2020.

However, with a lack of clarity over how HMRC would compensate for the CO_2 increase in the tax tables, if at all, many company car drivers opted for a cash alternative.

"After WLTP tests became mandatory to assess vehicle CO_2 emissions, we saw a trend of employers moving away from company car schemes and providing cash allowances for employees to take out their own PCH or PCP leases," explained Matt Walters, head of consultancy services and customer value at LeasePlan UK.

"Now, though, we're expecting the company car market to grow alongside the electric vehicle (EV) market, especially as employers and employees alike have a better understanding of the savings available through EV salary sacrifice."

It was the Government's response to its review of WLTP and vehicle taxes in the summer of 2019, which saw previously published BIK rates for 2020/21 being binned.

The new rates it introduced instead included a new zero BIK percentage rate for pure EVs. It currently stands at 1% and will stay low, at 2%, up to April 2025.

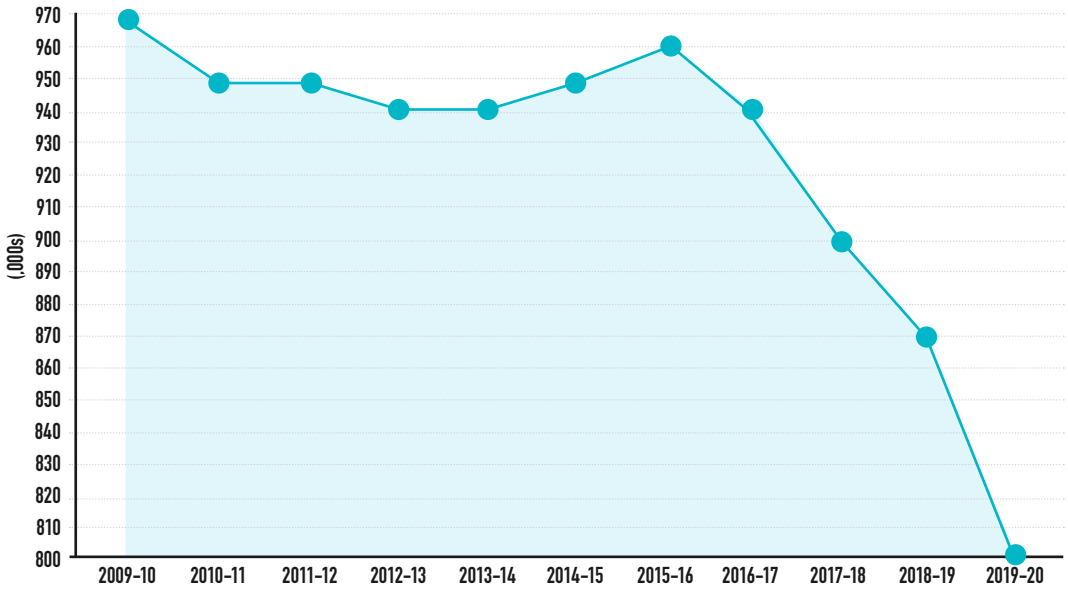
Chris Chandler, principal consultant at Lex Autolease, says it has been "really positive" to have the greatly reduced rates for ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs).

From June 2019 to December 2020, the number of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) on Lex Autolease's funded fleet increased by more than 325%. It has risen a further 60% in the past eight months.

"We are seeing a dramatic increase (in BEVs)," said Chandler. "The two key subjects when talking to customers at the moment are the transition to EVs and salary sacrifice."

These are being driven, in part, by sustainability agendas impacting

EMPLOYEES PAYING BIK ON A COMPANY CAR



Source: HMRC (2019/20 figures are provisional)

ISTOCK/FBAONA

Increased EV uptake has prompted one automotive commentator to predict company cars may top the million mark a few years from now

fleet policies. "It's also a very compelling argument to say to an employee that their BIK is 1% this year and will be 2% next," he said.

SAL/SAC DEMAND

With the announcement of new BIK tax rates and the increasing availability of cheaper EVs, from more manufacturers and with longer driving ranges, Smith says employees have realised how "competitively priced and practical" a plug-in vehicle could be through company car and sal/sac schemes.

More than two-thirds (69%) of the company cars Zenith ordered during the past financial year were pure electric or hybrid.

Comparing company car orders at Zenith from 2019/20, before the new BIK rates were introduced, with its order book for 2020/21, there was a 19% increase in the proportion of BEVs being ordered and a 19% reduction in the number of diesels. Petrol orders fell by 9%.

Smith told *Fleet News:* "Within salary sacrifice, the change is even greater, with 77% of all vehicles ordered in the 2021 tax year being electric or a form of hybrid."

He added: "Compared with the costs of leasing the same vehicle privately, salary sacrifice taxation benefits mean drivers can achieve a much lower cost of motoring.

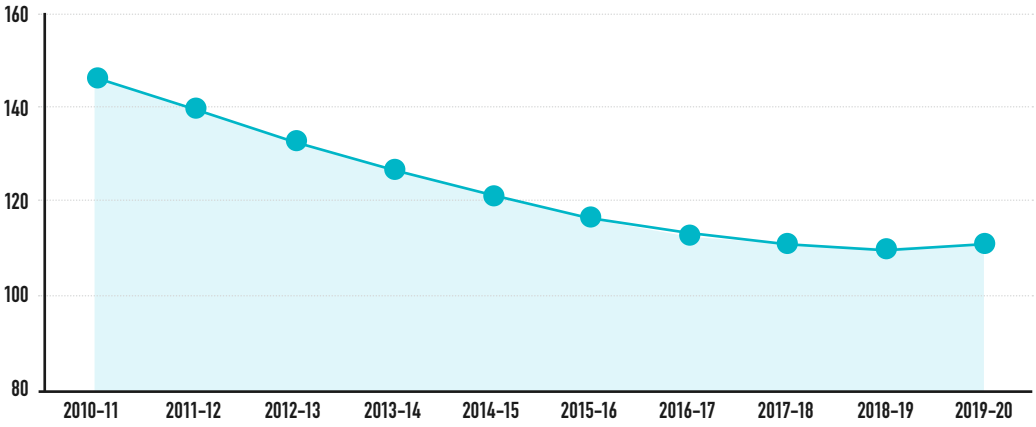
"Typically, these can be between 30% and 50% dependent on the EV chosen, the employee's personal circumstances and the employer's sal/sac set up."

According to the 2021 Arval Mobility Observatory Barometer, low tax rates on EVs have resulted in an increase – now 53% compared with 39% in 2020 – in employers offering sal/sac to non-company car drivers.

Shaun Sadlier, head of Arval Mobility Observatory in the UK, believes that interest in salary sacrifice could accelerate further in the coming years.

"What we are seeing emerge is

AVERAGE CO_2 EMISSIONS OF COMPANY CAR FLEET (G/KM)



Source: HMRC (2019/20 figures are provisional)

a definite future mobility role for EV-based salary sacrifice as a key element in a wave of new benefit initiatives that are designed to bring innovative options and ideas into play for employees, with only a very limited investment required by their employer," he said.

Lex Autolease has seen growing interest in its sal/sac scheme.

"We've had really strong demand," said Chandler. "Obviously, time will tell with regard to numbers, but there's certainly a lot of interest and it's a strong part of our offering.

"When you look at the fleet market and the automotive market in general, it's this flexibility, the offering of multiple channels, that's developing.

"The low BIK on EVs makes salary sacrifice a very attractive proposition to non-company car drivers and that's the main focus for us."

AVERAGE EMISSIONS IMPACT

As fleets increasingly electrify company car fleets, inevitably cutting average emissions in future years, the impact of WLTP on CO_2 temporarily halted that downward trend, according to the statistics from HMRC.

In 2002/03, when the current system of company car taxation was introduced, more than half (58%) of company cars reported emissions in excess of 165g/km. By 2010/11, it had fallen to one-in-five company cars (19%) and in 2019/20, provisional figures suggest it was just 1%.

At the other end of the scale, HMRC reported no company cars emitting less than 75g/km in 2010/11, while the new data shows this had increased to 70,000 in 2019/20, up 10,000 on the previous year

However, the growth in ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs), prior to the introduction of new BIK tax tables, was not enough for average emissions to fall again for the eighth consecutive year.

Between 2010/11 and 2018/19, average CO_2 emissions fell steadily from 147g/km to 110g/km, but HMRC's provisional figures for 2019/20 show that this has risen slightly to 111g/km.

HMRC says the increase may have been down to the impact of WLTP- and NEDC-correlated figures being used to measure CO_2.

As the proportion of plug-in vehicles increases, however, the impact of WLTP is expected to diminish, with average emissions falling again.

New figures from the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA), for example, show average company car emissions of 98g/km in Q1 of this year, while new company cars registered in the quarter averaged emissions of just 70g/km.

Cars obtained on personal leasing have significantly higher emissions, it said, as they are not subject to the same incentives, with CO_2 from new additions to the PCH fleet averaging 120g/km.

Furthermore, it says fleets are funding record numbers of EVs, with plug-in cars accounting for around one-third of orders during Q1 2021.

In total, 47% of new vehicle orders during the quarter were for plug-in or hybrid vehicles, with 19% for pure electric variants, three percentage points more than diesel.

The latest figures from HMRC show that the proportion of diesel company cars in 2019/20 was 61%, down from 82% in 2014/15.

Across the BVRLA fleet, BEVs and plug-in hybrids now account for 13% of cars.

■ **See page 10 for how declining company car numbers have impacted the Treasury's tax take.**

"WE'RE EXPECTING THE COMPANY CAR MARKET TO GROW ALONGSIDE THE EV MARKET, ESPECIALLY AS EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ALIKE HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SAVINGS AVAILABLE"

MATT WALTERS, LEASEPLAN

The dawn of a new era?

PAULO LARKMAN,
FLEET CONSULTANT AT HITACHI CAPITAL VEHICLE SOLUTIONS

Even though the latest figures published by HMRC report that the number of people paying company car tax has fallen substantially, this does not mean that the company car is redundant.

The HMRC figures demonstrate that around 960,000 company car drivers paid company car tax in 2015/16, compared with around 800,000 company car drivers in the 2019/20 tax year. This equates to a sizeable decline of 8.3%.

Yet, this simple downward trajectory measures market size chiefly on the number of submitted P11D tax forms containing a company car.

What is not included in this calculation is the balance between current usage and employee eligibility, building an understanding of the potential for the company car market.

In other words, these HMRC figures presently demonstrate how many people are taking a company car and not the people who could.

The downward trend in the number of employees taking a company car pre-2020 was, undoubtedly, driven by steady increases in benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax; an unattractive proposition for many despite the convenience of taking a car from their employer.

An unpredicted change in the company car market trend was, of course, Covid-19. Just days after the first lockdown was announced, the first 0% BIK rate for cars with zero tailpipe emissions was introduced in spring, last year.

This, alongside BIK rates for hybrids being between half and a third that of an internal combustion engined car, has created unequivocal demand for electric and hybrid vehicles.

Notably, while the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) reported registrations were down by around 30% in 2020, the number of electric and hybrid vehicles saw a 67% increase, with 285,000 registrations in 2020 compared with 261,000 diesel cars in the same period.

Given that retail registrations for electric and hybrid vehicles have shown less growth, it is reasonable to assume that the next BIK statistics will show a significant rise in the number of electric and hybrid vehicles.

Company car drivers have made a clear statement of intent around electric and hybrid cars, with 70% of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions orders now being alternative fuelled vehicles.

Fleet managers are also taking advantage of the comparatively low wholelife cost of electrified vehicles for their fleet.

This uptake in demand is only set to increase when considering the potential for employees currently not eligible for a company car.

Enabling employees to enjoy a low-emitting vehicle through a salary sacrifice scheme, for example, will help us all reach our sustainability goals of reduced carbon emissions.

By taking the cost from the employee's gross salary, the revival of such schemes will see employees pay less and employers save more.

The fleet industry has already shown a very strong recovery from the declines in registrations; should the interest in such schemes increase, we can fully expect company car figures to surpass the one million mark in 2023/24.

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Tax take increases despite fall in number of company car drivers

Figures break through £3,000 per vehicle barrier for first time, but change in overall total is minor

By Gareth Roberts

The average tax take from a company car has increased by £274 per vehicle, breaking the £3,000 barrier for the first time, new figures from HMRC suggest.

A company car, on average, yielded the Treasury £3,125 from benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) in 2019/20.

That was a 9.6% year-on-year increase on the average company car tax take of £2,851 reported in 2018/19, following a double-digit surge of 11.8% the previous year.

In terms of the total tax collected from BIK and NICs, however, the year-on-year change was marginal due to the dramatic drop in company car drivers.

The amount of tax collected from company car drivers and their employers by HMRC increased by £20 million to £2.5 billion in 2019/20.

The number of company cars fell by 70,000 to 800,000 vehicles – an 8% year-on-year decline (see page 6).

The BIK tax paid by employees stayed the same year-on-year at £175bn, while tax revenue from NICs, paid by employers on the cars they operate, was up £20m to £750m, provisional figures suggest.

The increasing tax take, despite the dwindling company car parc, means the amount of tax the Government yields from a company car has been steadily increasing year-on-year. There was a 9.7% uplift in the average yield from 2016/17 to 2017/18 and a further 7% increase the previous tax year.

At the start of the decade (2009/10), a company car was worth, on average, £1,680 in BIK and NICs to the Treasury. It collected £1.63bn from 970,000 company cars, which was £870m less than the £2.5bn collected in 2019/20, despite 170,000 more employees receiving the benefit.

The increasing tax take can, in part, be explained by the increase reported in the taxable value.

In 2019/20, the taxable value of the company car benefit was £5.42bn, up from £5.27bn the previous year, according to HMRC figures. It was approximately £2bn less, 10 years ago.

However, much of the increased tax take seen in the company car market has been down to the annual two percentage point increase in BIK rates, first introduced in 2015/16 (in previous years there had typically been a one percentage point increase).

This latest HMRC data set is from the financial year prior to BIK tax tables being overhauled and the introduction of the 0% BIK rate for pure electric vehicles (EVs) being introduced from April 2020.

PLUG-INS ON THE GROW

Just 10,000 cars were reported to have emissions below 75g/km of CO_2 in 2019/20, but since then leasing companies have reported a growing number of company car drivers adopting plug-in cars, which will, inevitably, have an impact on the Treasury's tax income.

With the sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and vans ending from 2030 and hybrids from 2035, and the Government consulting on a ban on new diesel trucks from 2040, the Treasury needs a plan to plug a potential £30bn shortfall from road taxes, including fuel duty.

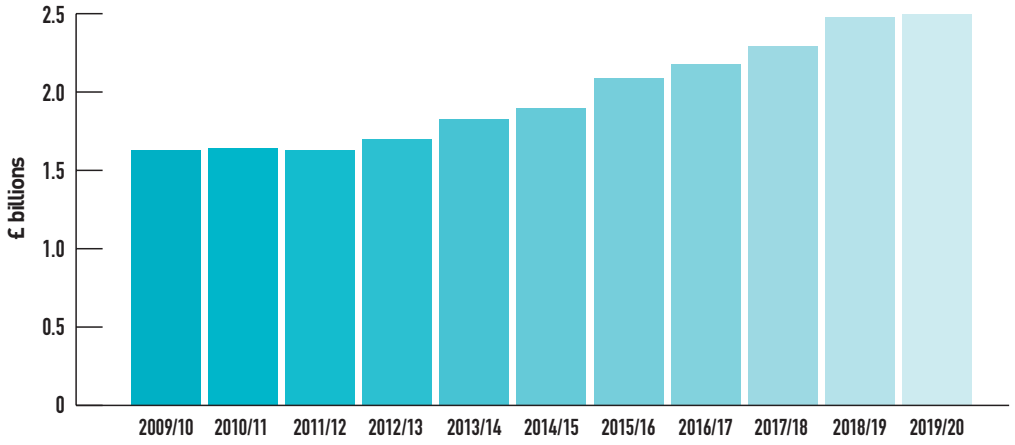
The Government is understood to be considering road pricing as a potential alternative, with vehicles charged per mile driven.

However, when when fleets were asked about the potential change to vehicle taxation earlier this year, opinion was divided (fleetnews.co.uk, March 1).

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

MPs on the transport committee launched an inquiry into road pricing in December; it has yet to publish its findings.

GOVERNMENT COMPANY CAR TAX TAKE (BIK AND NICs)



Source: HMRC (2019/20 figures are provisional)

£3,125
average tax revenue from a company car

£1.75bn
BIK paid in 2019/20

'FREE FUEL' DOWNWARD TREND CONTINUES

HMRC data shows that there has been a long-term downward trend in both the number of recipients and the total taxable value of car fuel benefits.

In 2010/11 the number of recipients of car fuel benefit was 250,000 and the total taxable value was £810m. By 2019/20 provisional figures suggest these had fallen to 90,000 and £470m, respectively.

HMRC says this trend is likely to reflect rising fuel prices during most of this period, causing employers and employees to look more carefully at whether the fuel benefit formula results in a tax charge commensurate with the perceived value of the benefit.

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The fuel consumption, CO_2 emissions and range figures mentioned comply with the WLTP test procedure. The fuel consumption, CO_2 emissions and range figures may vary depending on actual conditions of use and on different factors such as: charging frequency, driving style, speed, specific equipment, options, class of tyres, outside temperature and thermal comfort on board the vehicle. *2021/22 Tax year. **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 (August 2021).

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CMA takes close look at exclusive service station EV charging deals

Competition authority, fleets and MPs call for charge point plan ahead of 2030 ICE ban

By Gareth Roberts

An investigation into the long-term exclusive arrangements between Electric Highway, recently acquired by Gridserve, and three motorway service operators – Moto, Roadchef and Extra – has been launched by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

Electric Highway provides 80% of all charge points at motorway service stations, excluding Tesla charge points, which currently can only be used by Tesla vehicles.

Electric Highway's long-term exclusive arrangements, which last for periods between 10 and 15 years, cover around two-thirds of motorway service stations.

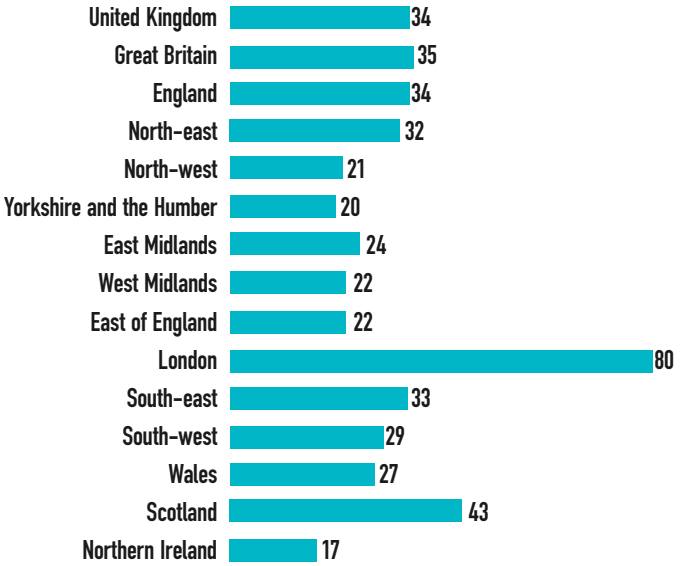
The CMA is concerned that these arrangements may make it difficult for other operators to provide competing charge points at motorway service stations. This, it says, could result in drivers losing out on the benefits of competition such as greater provision, more choice, competitive prices and reliable, high-quality charge points.

The CMA said it has not reached a view as to whether there is sufficient evidence of an infringement of competition law for it to issue a statement of objections to the parties under investigation.

It says it will consider any representations it receives before a decision is taken as to whether competition law has, in fact, been infringed.

CHARGING DEVICES PER 100,000 POPULATION

Source: CMA



CHARGE POINT PLAN

The announcement of the investigation comes as the CMA published a report into electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and suggested action must be ramped up ahead of the 2030 ban on diesel and petrol cars. (fleetnews.co.uk, July 23).

Andrea Coscelli, chief executive of the CMA, said: "EVs play a critical role in meeting net zero, but the challenges with creating an entirely new charging network should not be underestimated.

"Some areas of the roll-out are going well and the UK's network is growing – but it's clear that other parts, like charging at motorway service stations and on-street, have much bigger hurdles to overcome.

"There needs to be action now to address the postcode lottery in EV charging as we approach the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030."

The CMA wants the UK Government to attach conditions to its £950 million Rapid Charging Fund – which it is planning to use for grid upgrades at motorway service stations – to open up competition so drivers have a choice of charging provider at each service station.

Government, it says, should also support local authorities to boost roll-out of on-street charging – including defining a clear role for councils to manage the roll-out in their area and providing funding for the expertise needed for this to happen.

The Government's transport decarbonisation plan promises an EV infrastructure strategy by the end of the year, which will set out its vision for infrastructure roll-out, and roles for the public and private sectors in achieving it (fleetnews.co.uk, July 14).

By 2030, it expects to have 2,500 rapid charge points across the strategic road network; by 2035, 6.000.

It says it is also working with Ofgem on the deployment of the Energy Networks Association's £300m Green Recovery Scheme, announced in May, to accelerate motorway service area and wider EV charging infrastructure investment.

The UK has around 25,000 charge points and some forecasts suggest more than 10 times this amount will be needed by 2030.

EV FLEET ACCELERATOR

BP, BT, Direct Line Group, Royal Mail, ScottishPower, Severn Trent and Tesco, which have joined forces to create the Electric Vehicle Fleet Accelerator (EVFA) to help increase the uptake of EVs, have also criticised infrastructure plans (fleetnews.co.uk, July 27).

A report from the EVFA calls on the Government to enable the UK-wide rollout of charging infrastructure by fast-tracking EV charging infrastructure in the planning system, aligning with local authorities to unlock land for charging infrastructure and setting clear funding frameworks.

In addition, the report recommends increasing capital support for grid reinforcement costs, introducing minimum standards for reliability, safety and interoperability, and improving access to public charging networks.

It came as MPs on the transport committee also published a report questioning whether the Government plans are enough to deliver the public charging infrastructure needed across all regions of the UK.

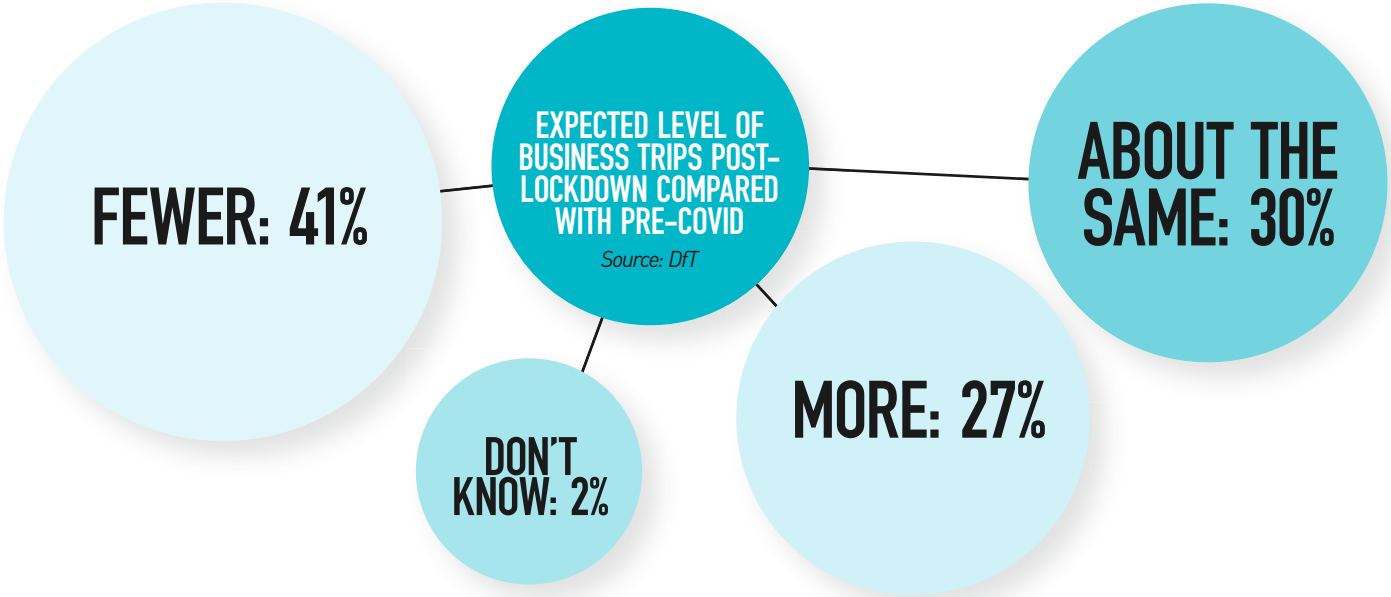
Drivers who live in rural or remote areas or who do not have off-street parking, for example, are at risk of being left behind, the report says (fleetnews.co.uk, July 28).

Huw Merriman MP, chair of the transport committee, said: "Putting guarantees in place on infrastructure is crucial, but one report after another flags concerns to Government about the provision of electric car charging infrastructure. Let ours be the last; it's time that ministers set out the route map to delivering a network of services for everyone across the UK."

> "THE CHALLENGES WITH CREATING AN ENTIRELY NEW CHARGING NETWORK SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED"
>
> **ANDREA COSCELLI, CMA**

Two-fifths of firms expect to make fewer business trips post-pandemic

Car travel increased during worst of the pandemic as shared transport usage dipped



By Gareth Roberts

The proportion of employees travelling on business is expected to stay broadly the same post-pandemic*, new research from the Department for Transport (DfT) suggests.

Companies expect an average of 38% of employees to be travelling for business, compared with 40% before the pandemic. Just 1% of the firms surveyed by Ipsos Mori said no employees will travel for face-to-face meetings.

The DfT data, however, suggests that the frequency of face-to-face meetings is expected to fall as virtual meetings will continue to be used in the future.

Two-fifths (41%) of companies said that they expect to make fewer business trips than before the pandemic (27% somewhat less, 14% far less) and more than a quarter (27%) expect to make more business trips (19% somewhat more, 8% far more).

Almost a third (30%) said they expected to make the same level of business trips.

Most businesses predicted that among their employees, most would travel at least monthly – but the proportion saying so fell from three-quarters (76%) before the pandemic to two-thirds (65%) after the pandemic, with a third (35%) predicting most employees would travel less than once a month.

Fewer expected their employees to travel at least weekly, down from two-fifths (40%) before the pandemic to a third (34%) after.

The largest reductions in weekly travel were expected among medium-sized businesses – almost half (49%) reported that their staff travelled at least weekly before the pandemic. This is estimated to fall to 39% post pandemic, and for companies in Wales/Scotland/Northern Ireland from 74% to 38%.

The largest reductions in monthly travel were also expected among medium-sized companies, from 87% to 67%, while the DfT data for large companies suggested a fall of 83% to 68%.

GROWING RELIANCE ON THE CAR

There has been a growing reliance on the company car, and grey fleet vehicles, according to the DfT survey.

Before the pandemic, car was the most frequently used main mode of travel for domestic business trips.

Almost one-in-three (29%) business trips were undertaken in a car, followed by long-distance rail (15%), local trains (14%), domestic airline (14%), local buses (6%), taxi (4%) and other modes including cycling/walking (3%). During the pandemic, use of the car as the main mode of business travel increased significantly, up from 29% to 43%, while there was a reduction in the use of shared transport, according to the DfT survey.

Use of long distance and inter-city train services as the main mode decreased significantly from 15% before the pandemic to 8% during the pandemic.

Use of domestic airline services also decreased significantly, from 14% pre-pandemic to 9% during the pandemic.

The findings echo those from the OC&C Speedometer *'Battery Late Than Never'* report, published earlier this year, which suggested that the pandemic had helped cement the importance of a car, despite people driving less (fleetnews.co.uk, May 6).

More than two-in-five drivers (42%), according to the OC&C Speedometer report, said the pandemic has increased their belief that a car is essential, due to fears around shared transport and the transmission of Covid-19.

Assuming restrictions are no longer in place, companies told the DfT survey that they expect to be using a similar mix of main modes as before the pandemic, with a return to long-distance rail and domestic air travel, and a reduction in the proportion of car journeys compared with levels during the pandemic.

Companies said that they expect an average of 33% of trips to use car as their main mode of transport, compared with 29% pre-pandemic.

Almost one-in-eight (13%) said they would choose to use long-distance rail as their main mode versus 15% pre-pandemic, and 11% would use domestic airlines, compared with 14% before Covid-19 struck.

In terms of other modes, companies expect an average of 10% of trips to be done on local trains versus 14% pre-pandemic and 11% during the pandemic.

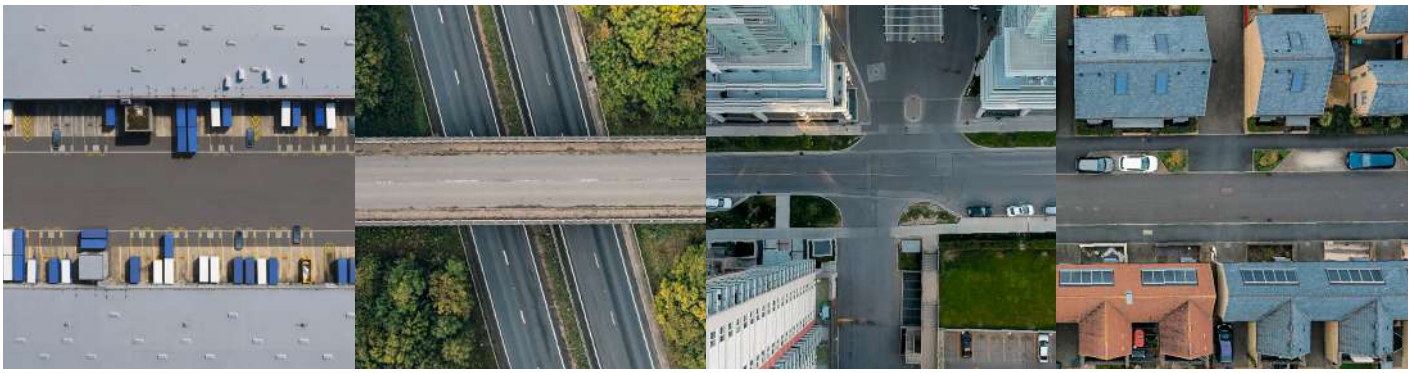
They survey suggests that 7% will use local buses, compared with 6% pre-pandemic and 4% during, and 5% will use taxis, which is an increase on 3% pre-pandemic and 5% during.

Other modes, including cycling and walking, are expected to account for 3% of business trips, which is the same as proportion seen pre-pandemic and down from the 5% seen during Covid-19.

* *Post-pandemic was defined in the survey as being 'when Covid-19 is controlled to the point that all restrictions on business and the public have been lifted'.*

FFM seeks quality, not just quantity

Newly created leasing company is for all car and van makes, not just Ford



Ford Fleet Management (FFM) is looking to establish itself among the top 10 leasing companies in the UK with a focus on specialist knowledge, vehicles, connectivity and support.

FFM was created in summer 2020 when Ford and ALD Automotive signed a shareholder agreement to create a new integrated all-makes leasing and fleet management business.

The company has been up and running since the start of 2021 and John Wright, its managing director, says the new company has big ambitions to build the business over the next five years.

Wright says: "We should be troubling the top 10 of the FN50, but it's not just about adding volume for the sake of it.

"We're being very tailored and specific with our services and thinking, rather than trying to be all things to all people."

STRENGTHS COMBINED

Wright explains that FFM can leverage the strengths of both shareholders with Ford's brand presence and market leadership in light commercial vehicles (LCVs), as well as ALD's fleet management, leasing and funding expertise.

He says: "We can offer flexibility and consultative advice on pressing issues like switching to electric vehicles (EVs), without the baggage that comes with being a large organisation."

Being a specialist for all-makes van customers, FFM has a particular focus on exacting customer requirements, including facilitation of LCV conversions.

FFM's team, based at Ford's Dunton headquarters, helps fleets manage their vehicles, aiming to keep them on the road.

The latest connectivity through factory-fit telematics on new Ford products, alongside the ability to fit plug-in telematics to any make or model, helps to intelligently connect and manage the fleet.

Wright says: "We're really getting into detail with customers on how they can keep their fleet moving.

"With a greater level of connectivity, we can be prognostic and proactively manage off-road incidents."

Fleet managers can customise how hands-on they would like to be by looking at data from their connected fleet, with access to real-time dashboards to see what's happening with vehicles at a glance.

FFM's team will interpret the data and turn it into something actionable. Then it's up to individual fleet managers.

Wright says part of what makes FFM unique is building its aftersales model on being able to offer a flexible mix of out-of-hours and mobile servicing.

It means maintenance work can be scheduled at a fleet's convenience, with around 90% of jobs completed remotely.

On rare occasions when a replacement vehicle is needed, FFM has invested in a flexible leasing fleet that offers specialist LCV vehicles like ambulances, cherry pickers and tippers.

THE ROAD TO ZERO

Electrification is a key conversation that many fleets are having and FFM offers an EV consultancy service that can help look at total cost of ownership (TCO) to determine how best to transition to EVs.

Wright says: "Products like Ford's E-Transit are hitting the sweet spot with up to 217 miles of range.

"But the key is to make sure that range is utilised intelligently and we're working on depot charging solutions that will be really important for the future."

FFM's offering includes more traditional funding options like contract hire, short term rental, as well as the option for sale and leaseback, but it can also facilitate flexible contracts on three-to-12-month terms on a 'try before you buy' basis.

Wright says: "Try before you buy means organisations can run EVs for an extended period to see how they're absorbed into their fleets with a much lower level of commitment.

"It's just one of the many ways we're working with customers on a consultative basis, creating tailored products and talking to customers about their needs."

The 10 commitments to decarbonising cars and vans

Last month the Government published its Decarbonising Transport plan. The contents will have many ramifications for fleets. *Andrew Ryan* reports

The Government last month published its long-awaited Decarbonising Transport plan which outlines how the UK can significantly cut CO_2 emissions through changes in road, rail and aviation.

It covers a broad spectrum of topics, from charging infrastructure to financial incentives, many of which will impact on how a fleet will operate in the future.

Here, and in the following two issues of *Fleet News*, we will look at three major strands – decarbonising cars, vans, motorcycles and scooters; delivering decarbonisation through places; and future transport choice – to focus on what the strategy will mean for a variety of organisations.

In part one, we look at the Government's aim to decarbonise cars, vans, motorcycles and scooters, examining the 10 commitments it made in the 220-page report.

COMMITMENT 1: The Government will consult on regulatory options, including zero emissions vehicle (ZEV) mandates, to deliver petrol and diesel phase out dates for new vehicles.

Last November, the Government announced its plan to end the sale of new conventional internal combustion engine (ICE) petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030, with all new cars and vans having to be fully zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035.

It is now consulting on the design of a new domestic regulatory regime for CO_2 emissions from road vehicles.

This includes the possible introduction of a zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, which would set targets for vehicle manufacturers to sell a certain proportion of ZEVs.

Manufacturers would earn credits for selling ZEVs and could either meet their targets through amassing enough credits by selling the right number of ZEVs or by buying excess credits from manufacturers that have over-performed against their own targets.

The plan also says, subject to consultation, that sales of trucks up to and including 26 tonnes will be zero emissions from 2035, and heavier trucks by 2040.

All new motorcycle and scooters will also be fully zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035.

COMMITMENT 2: The Government has published a zero emission cars and vans delivery plan.

In July, the Government published its Transitioning to Zero Emission Cars and Vans: 2035 Delivery Plan.

This aims to give greater clarity on the pathway to the phase out dates for the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles and outlines timelines, milestones and how progress will be monitored.

Key dates on its roadmap include:

- **2021:** Publish a series of policy documents including: EV charging infrastructure and hydrogen strategy; open workplace charging scheme to charities and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs); complete consultations on future road vehicle CO_2 regulatory regime and smart charging.
- **2022-2023:** launch local EV infrastructure fund; EV Homecharge Scheme to focus on renters, leaseholders and those living in flats.
- **2023-2024:** six rapid chargepoints at every motorway station.
- **2024-2025:** potential date for introduction of a new road vehicle CO_2 emissions regulatory regime.
- **2025:** favourable company car tax rates for zero emission cars until at least March 2025.
- **2030:** sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to be phased out; at least 2,500 high-powered charge points across the strategic road network.
- **2030-2035:** All new cars and vans to deliver significant zero emission capability from 2030-2035.
- **2035:** All new cars and vans to be 100% zero emission at the tailpipe.

COMMITMENT 3: The Government will continue to support demand for ZEVs through a package of financial and non-financial incentives.

There are already many financial incentives

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available to help organisations electrify their fleets, such as the plug-in car and van grants, workplace charging schemes and favourable benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates for company car drivers.

The plug-in car grant was introduced in 2011 up to a maximum of £5,000, and the size of it has been reduced several times since, the latest in March this year. Cars are now eligible for a maximum of £2,500, small vans £3,000 and large vans £6,000.

These grants will run until at least 2022-23 as part of the Government's £582 million package.

The current BIK rate for fully electric vehicles is 1%, and in April this will rise to 2%, where it will remain for at least three financial years.

COMMITMENT 4: The Government will consult this year on a phase out date of 2035, or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, for the sale of new non-zero emission powered two and three wheelers.

Zero emission light powered vehicles can provide a clean and efficient way to travel, particularly in urban areas where they can also reduce congestion if used instead of a larger vehicle such as a car or van.

"While cars and vans outnumber motorcycles on UK roads, motorcycles are an important and sizeable vehicle population with 1.4m licensed in 2020," says the plan.

"We do not want to see them remaining fossil fuelled as the rest of the vehicle fleet cleans up."

COMMITMENT 5: The Government will deliver an action plan this year to build new opportunities for zero emission light powered vehicles.

The Government says the potential for light

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Gavin Franks, director of business services at the AA

We're undoubtedly at a landmark point in automotive history as we witness our vehicles change and shift to electric and other fuels of the future.

However, this change goes beyond the power source alone as we also see huge advances in vehicle operating systems.

We've already seen great strides taken in the software of our vehicles with connected cars, but this has been more about diagnostics and operating systems than driver experience. Going forward, it'll be about reconfiguring vehicles to meet an individual driver's preferences and expectations and with each update improving their experience as well as the performance and capability of the vehicle.

This development is an interesting and exciting one for us at the AA. We're well placed to support our vehicle manufacturer customers with end-to-end support for their drivers, from breakdown assistance through to recall management and software customer support. We can manage the customer experience for drivers at every step of their journey.

Our recent New Horizons report showed how much value is placed on customer service, in particular with more flexible and convenient solutions. 83% of SME fleet managers highlighted the importance of an SMR capability that matched the agility and flexibility that an individual would expect.

Going forward, it'll be interesting to see if automotive manufacturers place more importance on what our vehicles are capable of doing from a software perspective and how long it'll be until we're waiting for the latest software upgrades for our vehicles.

To download your personal copy of the New Horizons research report, visit: https://bit.ly/3gaKcc5.

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powered vehicles in urban logistics and personal mobility is "enormous", with benefits including reduced emissions and congestion.

It will utilise Zemo Partnership's strategic partnership with the Motorcycle Industry Association to coordinate action in this area and publish options for light powered vehicles at national and local level this year.

COMMITMENT 6: The Government will lead by example with 25% of its car fleet ultra low emission by December 2022 and 100% of its car and van fleet zero emission by 2027.

The Government says it operates the UK's second largest fleet with more than 40,000 vehicles, and this commitment will mean it is leading by example.

COMMITMENT 7: The Government will ensure the UK's charging infrastructure network meets the demands of its users.

The number of charge points required by 2030 is hotly disputed by industry experts.

Think-tank Policy Exchange believes 400,000 public chargers will be required, but the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) puts it significantly higher at 2.3 million – equating to 700 charge points needing to be installed daily to the end of the decade.

According to Zap-Map, there are currently around 43,000 public charge points in the UK.

The Government is due to publish a strategy later this year for the roll-out of charging infrastructure ahead of the 2030 ban.

It has helped fund the installation of more than 190,000 charge points in homes and businesses across the country, as well as almost 25,000 chargers on the public network.

Specific commitments include that by 2023, working with Highways England, the Government aims to have at least six high-powered, open access charge points (150kw-350kw) at every motorway service area in England, with some larger sites having as many as 12. By 2035, it expects around 6,000 high-powered charge points across England's motorways and major A Roads.

Motorcycle emissions will be expected to clean up in line with cars and vans

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The sector has also attracted significant private investment from companies such as BP Pulse, Gridserve and Instavolt, meaning it is not dependent on Government investment to grow.

COMMITMENT 8: The Government will support and nurture innovation in the automotive sector.

Together with industry, almost £1.5 billion has been invested through the Advanced Propulsion Centre and Faraday Battery Challenge to research, develop and commercialise low carbon and zero emission automotive technologies.

Earlier this year, the Government announced nearly £500m for the Automotive Transformation Fund which will be made available over the next four years for capital and research and development projects to build an EV supply chain.

COMMITMENT 9: The Government will invest £15m in 2021/22 to help address the backlog in traffic signal maintenance to improve traffic flow and reduce emissions.

The Government says traffic signal controls are essential for managing congestion, delay and emissions, but operations are undermined by poorly maintained detection systems and out-of-date traffic management plans.

The cash will help highways authorities to make their signals work effectively to reduce emissions, as well as enabling "new technologies and data systems that will support the delivery of a digital and connected road network".

COMMITMENT 10: The Government will review the National Networks National Policy Statement.

The current statement, which covers strategic planning policy for major road and rail schemes, was written in 2014.

Since then, the Government has made major announcements which impact this area, such as its legal commitment to net zero, its 10-point Plan for a Green Revolution, and its Decarbonising Transport document.

Reviewing the statement will, it says, allow it to ensure the road network meets today's demands as well as ensuring "the tax system encourages the uptake of EVs and that revenue from motoring taxes keeps pace with this change".

The deadline for the sale of new ICE vans has been set for 2030

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HOW DO WE ACCURATELY SET THE BAR FOR AUTONOMOUS VALET PARKING?

Car parking is likely to be the first automotive manifestation of genuinely beneficial autonomy. But, ensuring that the testing of this technology accurately reflects real-world use is key, says *Alastair Evanson* head of commercial and business development at Horiba Mira

It is broadly agreed that autonomous valet parking (AVP) is likely to be among the first uses of self-driving automation that the vast majority of motorists will encounter. The reasons are straightforward – car parks present a manageable challenge for the technology and there are few drivers who will begrudge machines taking over such a joyless chore.

The challenge of AVP is a close-at-hand test for vehicle automation because car parks are finite physical spaces and will initially operate at slow speed. Moreover, in their automated guise, car parks will become devoid of pedestrians, not only adding to the safety dividend, but also removing a major critical dimension from the operational design domain (ODD), which reduces the complexity of the autonomous solution required.

The challenge of automated parking is more resolvable in a way autonomous driving in varied road conditions is not. It also has the potential to unlock myriad benefits that improve efficiency. AVP also presents new commercial opportunities, enhances quality of life and makes a contribution to the pressing issue of air quality.

From an urban efficiency perspective, AVP presents a solution for city planners and urban transit authorities in the face of the tendency of 'manual' cark parks to be inefficient as drivers look for spaces, which contributes to congestion on the surrounding roads.

Meantime, from a commercial view, the need to manage the interaction of pedestrians and vehicles within the confines of car parks has necessitated the integration of speed calming to temper traffic flows and loss of productive space given over to the safe egress of pedestrians for car park operators. While these considerations may prove an inconvenience for a solitary driver, they aggregate into considerable efficiency losses for scale users of car parks – from large employers to operators of public and private facilities such as hospitals, airports, convention centres and hotels as well as commercial fleet operators such as hire car companies.

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

With the new ISO 23374 standard under development, interoperability between cars and car park infrastructure is on the horizon. This convergence of standards is set to catalyse the development of AVP solutions that has, until now, been hindered by the nature of parking that demands interaction between multiple and disparate parties from vehicle manufacturers to payment system providers and urban architects.

This new array of commercial opportunities that AVP offers for next-generation car parks includes the potential to increase site capacity by allowing vehicles to be parked closer together. For existing car parks being retro-fitted for AVP, the removal of pedestrian walkways will also provide more commercially productive space (extra parking bays) and the enhanced capability to close and secure parking areas to enhance vehicle security. Together with optimised in-bay EV charging, seamless payments and optimised pricing, these benefits are just the starting point for not just efficiency savings, but an entirely new platform for emerging services.

Horiba Mira's new £100 million Assured CAV facility provides a perfect controlled car parking environment benefitting from 4G/5G connectivity to test not just AVP for vehicle manufacturers, but all upstream and downstream contributors from architects to civil engineers, MaaS developers to fleet managers and car park operators. It provides the opportunity to test the performance of parking systems and infrastructure.

However, as part of Europe's most advanced CAV testing infrastructure, Horiba Mira's Assured CAV provides far more than just a facility to test AVP. With its comprehensive ecosystem that interlinks autonomous vehicle testing environments for higher-speed highway driving (Assured CAV Highway), simulated urban driving with more complex road junctions and interaction with a urban environment (Assured CAV City) and the 1,900m2 multi-storey car park (Assured CAV Parking), it is possible to replicate the last mile '500/50/5' dynamics that see a vehicle transition from 500m of highway travel to 50m of city streets and complete its final 5m into a car park bay.

With its scalable capacity to span all conceivable use cases and applications of AVP, Assured CAV Parking provides a hub for vehicle manufacturers, hardware and software developers, communications providers and infrastructure companies to collaborate on the emerging opportunities this first test of autonomous solutions presents.

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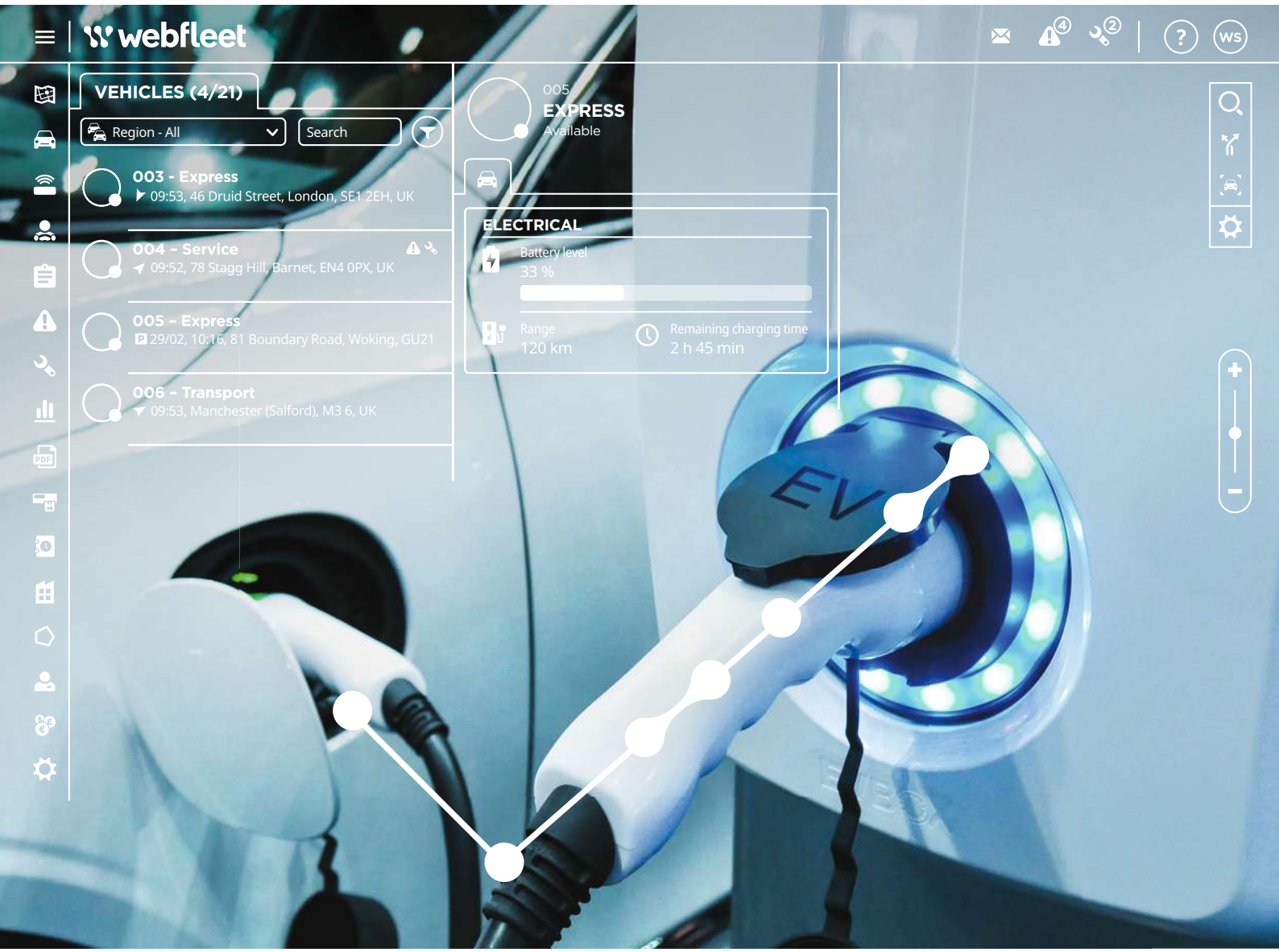

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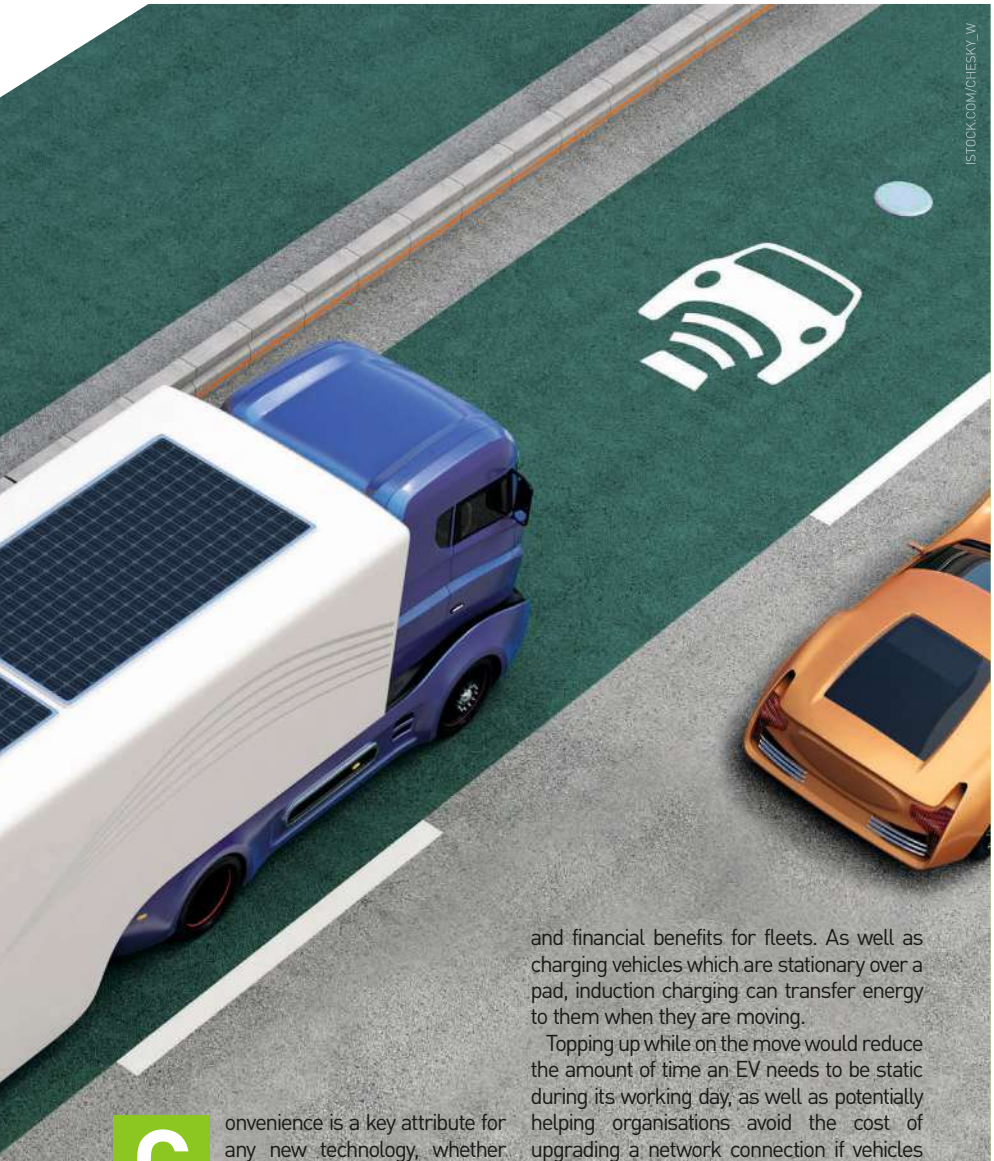
CUTTING THE CORD

Wireless charging has the potential to cut downtime and reduce costs for fleets, but its future is far from certain. *Andrew Ryan* reports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Convenience is a key attribute for any new technology, whether that's wireless data transfer, an integrated fleet management software package or a smartphone app which would be at the heart of any mobility as a service (MaaS) product.

It is also central to the potential uptake of wireless electric vehicle (EV) charging.

This would allow a driver to simply park above a pad and leave their EV to charge automatically: no messing around plugging in and unplugging heavy cables in the rain.

Such is the convenience benefit it offers that some industry research has found wireless charging could be critical in accelerating the transition to EVs.

"It could also offer reduced street clutter in public charging deployments and open up opportunities to other users, for instance, addressing some accessibility concerns," says Matt Knight, senior technical specialist at low emission vehicle research and consultancy organisation Cenex.

The technology could also have operational and financial benefits for fleets. As well as charging vehicles which are stationary over a pad, induction charging can transfer energy to them when they are moving.

Topping up while on the move would reduce the amount of time an EV needs to be static during its working day, as well as potentially helping organisations avoid the cost of upgrading a network connection if vehicles are all charged at the same depot overnight.

"It's really important to be clear that wireless charging will not replace plug-in charging," says Denis Naberezhnykh, technical director at engineering and environmental consultancy Ricardo.

"It's likely to be an additional charging functionality that could enable use of opportunity charging throughout the day that does not require additional downtime, or where plugging in is not practical.

"For example, it could be a practical solution for taxis. As they are queuing up and slowly moving through taxi ranks, it makes sense for them to pick up some charge as they're doing that because their time is precious: time taken out to charge would be time they're not picking up passengers."

The potential benefits of wireless charging for taxis in Nottingham was examined in the WiCET project led by Cenex in 2019.

This analysed GPS data from 10 internal combustion engine (ICE) Hackney Carriages,

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Rob Morris, head of fleet and remarketing, Volvo Car UK

Last month Volvo Cars globally reported the best half-year results in terms of sales and operating profit in its 94-year history amid increasing demand for its cars across all regions. Volvo Car UK has also seen a strong performance, up 53% versus 2020 and comfortably outperforming the market. Increased demand for our Recharge plug-in hybrid and pure electric models has resulted in over 65% of true fleet orders being electrified in the first half of 2021.

We continue to offer a wide choice of plug-in hybrid powertrains across our range as well as a new Inscription Expression entry-level trim on our SUVs, making them accessible to more businesses and drivers. In fact, the XC40 Recharge Plug-in Hybrid was recently named Best Hybrid Small SUV at the What Car? Electric Car Awards 2021.

We have also been pleased to see many of our business customers taking advantage of our complimentary home charge offer – now available until the end of September with any plug-in hybrid or pure electric purchase.

Finally, our C40 Recharge Pure Electric is available to order to now. This is a brand-new design direction for Volvo in the form of a crossover delivering all the benefits of an SUV but with a lower and sleeker design.

For a closer look at the range and more details on how Volvo could support you and your business please take a look at the special report on pages 55-59.

Alternatively, call us on 0345 600 4027 or visit volvocars.co.uk/business

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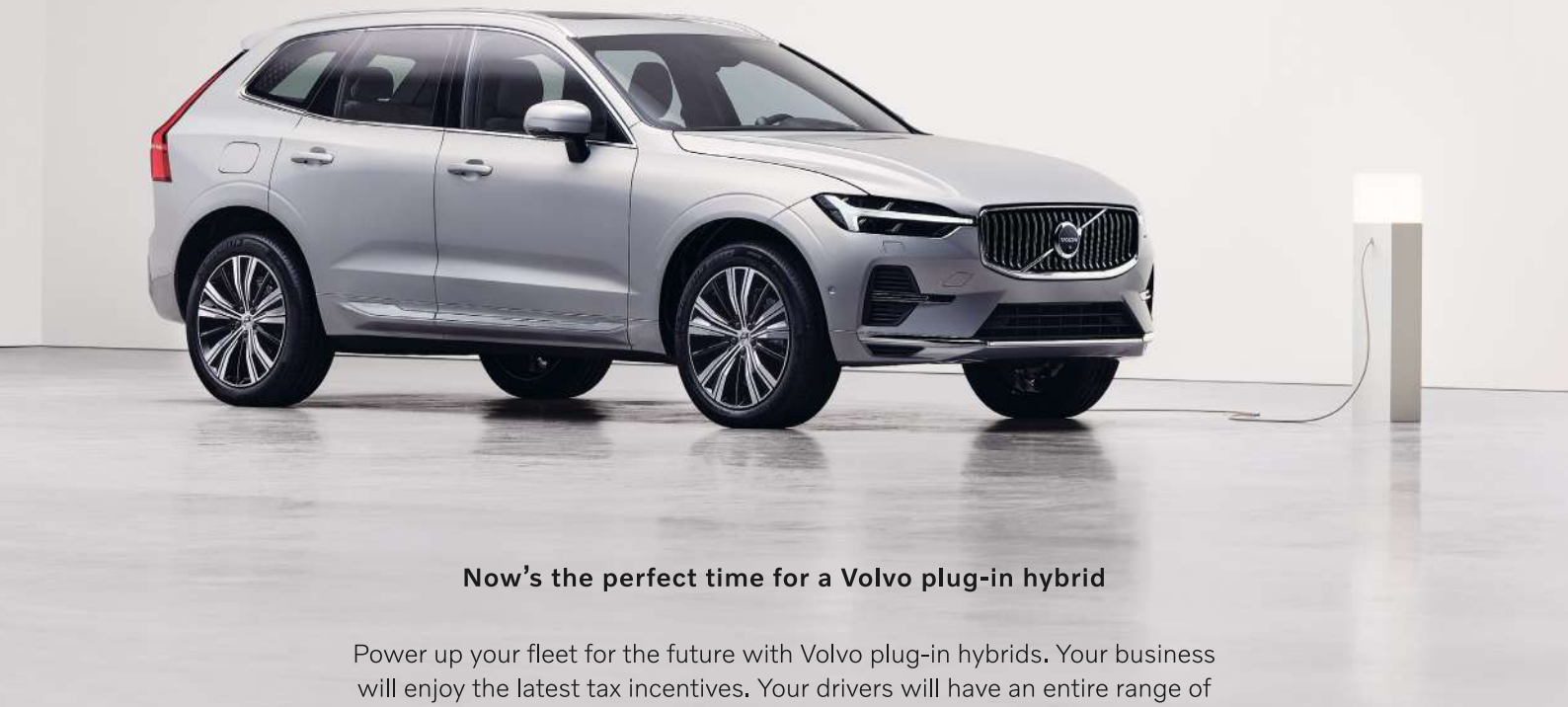

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or call the Volvo Car Business Centre on 0345 600 4027

Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures for the Volvo plug-in hybrid range, in MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 83.1 – 156.7 (3.4 – 1.8). WLTP CO_2 emissions 76 – 40g/km. WLTP electric energy consumption 3.5 – 4.3 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 25.6 – 37.3 miles. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption, CO_2 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.

looking at how they were used during the day and the opportunities they would have to charge.

The daily mileages varied between vehicles, but the average driving distance was around 50 miles and the energy requirement was around 20kWh.

"The analysis found that, dependent on charging speed, the duration of downtime and the shift patterns, home charging a 40kWh Nissan eNV200 would not always have been sufficient to meet the daily requirements without additional charging," says Knight.

The study found that wireless charging could give some vehicles a 30% uplift in the state of charge in a day, meaning they could avoid the downtime caused by plugging in to charge during the working day.

CHARGING WHILE PARKED

Wireless charging can be divided into two types: static and dynamic.

Static is where a charging pad is installed in the ground and a vehicle parks over it to charge. It is well suited to circumstances where the user cannot be relied on to charge all of the time, such as with car clubs.

It may also be suitable for automated vehicles where a user is not always available to plug it in, such as robotic vehicles in warehouses or, eventually, autonomous taxis.

Project AMiCC (AMiCable Charging) was due to begin this month (August) and will see eight modified Nissan Leaf and eNV200 models used to evaluate the benefits of static wireless charging for security, estate and pool car fleets.

Many of the vehicles in these fleets have a low dwell time and high utilisation, leaving short periods of time to recharge the vehicle battery.

Funded by the Office for Zero Emission vehicles and supported by Innovate UK, Sprint Power has been converting the vehicles and installing 11kW wireless chargers at the University of Nottingham campus, the main campus at the University of Warwick and at two Leeds City Council sites.

Data will be collected through a telematics system, the chargers and the end-users. Key success factors will include user acceptance, the readiness of the technology and its reliability.

Carmakers have also invested in the technology with, for example, BMW running pilot projects beginning in Germany in 2018 and in the US in mid-2019, where a 530e fitted with wireless equipment was able to recharge at 3.2kW.

A key step forward in the development of wireless charging came in October last year when SAE International, which defined the five levels of autonomous driving, published the first global standard that specifies both the EV and supply equipment requirements for wireless charging up to 11kW.

It is widely considered the new standard, SAE J2954, will be a key enabler for accelerating the adoption of EVs and autonomous vehicles.

"Charging your EV should be as simple as

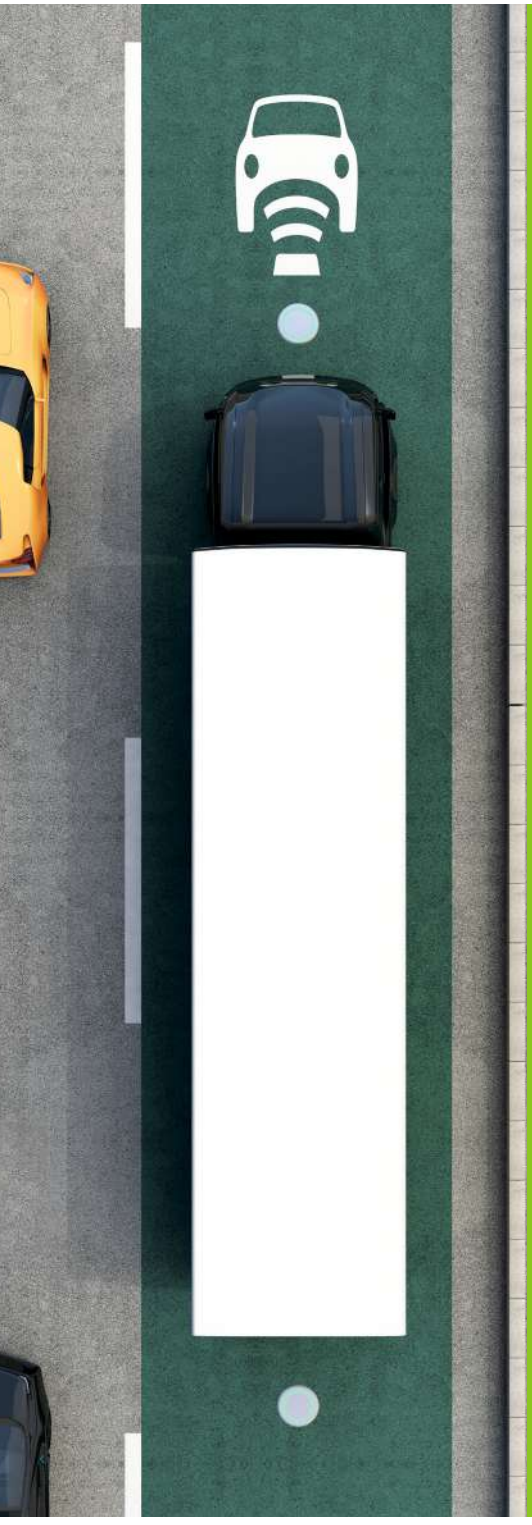
> "CHARGING YOUR EV SHOULD BE AS SIMPLE AS PARKING AND WALKING AWAY"
>
> **JESSE SCHNEIDER, SAE J2954 TASK FORCE**

HOW DOES WIRELESS CHARGING WORK?

Wireless charging is based on the principle of electromagnetic induction. Power is transferred by creating a magnetic resonance field between the transmitting pad on the ground and a receiving pad fitted on the underside of a vehicle

The energy crosses an air gap (the ground clearance between the pads) and is then converted from AC into DC on the vehicle to charge the vehicle batteries.

After a communication handshake between the emitting and receiving pads when they are facing each other, charging will begin automatically.



parking and walking away," says Jesse Schneider, chair of the SAE J2954 Task Force.

"The SAE J2954 Standard gives freedom and convenience to do exactly that, safely and automatically. It is a major step forward in wireless charging commercialisation for EVs."

Naberezhnykh says manufacturers are now using it to start incorporating wireless charging into their production vehicles.

"You should see those coming to the market within the next five years," he adds.

CHARGING ON THE MOVE

Dynamic charging can do everything static charging can, but transfers energy to vehicles while they are in motion.

This could further reduce any downtime needed to charge as it has the potential to top-up charge or direct power to many vehicles using the same stretch of road, or any vehicles repeatedly using the same road section.

"Even travelling 100m on a road takes just a few seconds, so these vehicles are not picking up a huge amount of charge in that time," says Naberezhnykh.

"But, if you do that frequently or the chargers are located in a place where it takes a bit longer to drive over, for example for buses this could be on the approach to a bus stop, at the bus stop, and when leaving a bus stop, you could capture the time when the vehicle is slowing down, is stationary for a little while, and then pulls off.

"That could be something like a few minutes, so if you do that multiple times in a day that could generate a significant amount of charge.

"If the vehicles receive top-ups to extend their range like this, it could reduce the size – and therefore costs – of the batteries needed in the vehicle and reduce operational risk."

Less charge would also need to be delivered at night as the EVs had been charging during the day, therefore creating an opportunity for lower power and cheaper plug-in chargers and lower cost of grid connections or reinforcements at depots, says Naberezhnykh.

This could help mitigate the extra cost of installing a wireless charging system, which is more expensive and complex than that for plug-in charging, he adds.

There are also practical challenges with how to install such infrastructure in the road quickly, cost-effectively and in a way that does not create more maintenance for roads or interferes with planned road maintenance.

DYNACOV PROJECT

These are among the issues which will be looked at in the DynaCov initiative, which sees Ricardo supporting a project led by Coventry City Council and working alongside electricity distribution network operator Western Power Distribution.

The 11-month study will investigate the implementation of dynamic wireless charging solutions for EVs in Coventry and consist of research and data modelling to assess the feasibility for dynamic wireless charging in the UK. It will also look at the potential for the first real-world demonstrator.

"If you have a fleet that's depot-based and all its vehicles need charging overnight, they can require a huge amount of power," says Naberezhnykh.

"That can require some pretty expensive grid upgrade costs. DynaCov will be looking to see if we can take some of the charging need and spread it among the routes where vehicles operate day-to-day.

"This would distribute the cost of the grid connection among more locations where much less power would be needed at each location, and we could probably utilise spare capacity in existing substations to do that."

Given its potential, how soon will it be before it becomes clear what role wireless charging will play in a future EV infrastructure?

"We're all in the learning stages," says Naberezhnykh. "Wireless charging is a really interesting technology that definitely has some potential, but no one is in a position to say exactly how it will be part of the future use of EVs.

"Stationary wireless charging almost certainly will be in some way, shape or form.

"Dynamic charging will come down to the cost benefit analysis of whether the total benefits of installing and using it outweigh the complexity and the cost of putting it in the road infrastructure."

HOW EFFICIENT IS WIRELESS CHARGING?

SAE International says tests using a 10-inch ground clearance have shown that wireless systems operate at grid-to-battery efficiencies of up to 94%.

This is slightly less efficient than plugged-in charging, but even that method suffers from energy loss as the vehicle's on-board charger creates heat during the process.

This means that, for any EV charging session, more energy leaves the charge point than goes into the battery, so an operator pays for more electricity than the vehicle uses.

"Generally, a good wireless system with sensible gap distance alignment (between pads on road and on vehicle) is probably going to be within a couple of percent of what you'd see with a cable-based system," says Matt Knight of Cenex.

IS WIRELESS ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING SAFE?

Yes. The ground-based pad activates only when it senses a compatible vehicle is above it, so the magnetic field is not constantly emitted.

Non-ferrous or conductive materials will not affect or start the pad, although metal objects, such as cans, may.

If they do, then the magnetic field will cause them to heat up, but "technologies are being put in place for object detection so you will be able to spot metallic debris", says Denis Naberezhnykh of Ricardo.

The systems will perform safety checks before charging starts and continuously monitor the process, terminating power transfer automatically, if required, due to breach of any safety parameters.

END-TO-END
EV EXPERTISE

ALL YOUR ELECTRIC FLEET NEEDS, IN ONE PLACE

We're committed to accelerating the transition to alternative fuels. From developing a bespoke strategy and designing a fit-for-purpose policy to launching a supercharged salary sacrifice scheme, our EV gurus are ready to support you and your drivers, always.

Connect with our experts

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Rivus Fleet Solutions is one of the UK's largest, full-service fleet management providers.

Our fleet services are routed in more than 100 years of experience. Today, we are an award-winning fleet manager, capable of managing every stage of the fleet lifecycle. We offer customers a unique blend of choice, flexibility, and expertise. From funding and acquisition, design and build, compliance, to accident management, service maintenance and repairs through our own garage network, or through our mobile service and repair specialists, it's our job to ensure our customers can get their job done.

We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver innovation, efficiency, and reliability. Our expertise and experience stretches from cars, LCVs, HGVs, specialist plant equipment to electric vehicles – and everything in between. Rivus Fleet Solutions is perfectly placed to support all your fleet requirements in one trusted, convenient service.

RIVUS FLEET SOLUTIONS

Rivus Fleet Solutions is leading the charge to electric with EVaaS

The future of electric vehicles (EVs) is a hot topic in the automotive industry right now, given the impending 2030 deadline to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel models. Fleet management companies up and down the UK are working out their long-term vision for supplying and servicing their fleets, but Rivus Fleet Solutions feels it has a head start with its new EVaaS proposition.

What is EVaaS?

Electric Vehicles as a Service (EVaaS) is Rivus' offering to fleet operators that will help them navigate the changes to electric as smoothly as possible. EVaaS offers an end-to-end, single service solution so customers have everything required to move forward with a new electric fleet and transition to a greener future.

Preparing for EVaaS

Rivus' EVaaS offering was initiated to ensure its 56 independent garages are EV-ready, with technicians and engineers trained and accredited to the correct IMI (Institute of the Motor Industry) L3 level to safely service and maintain its customers' EVs, as well as having the correct tooling and safety equipment.

Rivus is already managing a significant number of EVs on behalf of its fleet customers that mostly work in essential services. So, keeping them moving is vital.

The training programmes started in April 2021 and the investment in training will continue throughout 2021 and beyond, until each technician is fully trained in delivering a quality EV service.

The charging infrastructure in Rivus' garage network was also reviewed to ensure vehicles can be handed back to customers, ensuring operational readiness. The charging supplier was appointed through an extensive tender exercise. This was used as a case study to ensure Rivus has been through the process, giving it first-hand experience of what customers will encounter when installing at their offices or depot locations.

Investing in the team

Thomas Maerz, Chief Development Officer at Rivus, knew the only way EVaaS was going to be a success was by hiring the right people and training its existing team members. Sarah Gray was appointed Product & Services Development Manager (EV) to drive the EV strategy. Rivus has also invested in project management and data analysis teams to support the development and roll-out of EVaaS.

To support technicians who offer Electric Vehicles as a Service to customers, Rivus has invested in training to IMI Levels 3 and 4 across the whole of its garage network. This training has started and will continue to roll-out in 2021.

Investing in the garage network

Rivus set about investing significantly in its garages to provide its technicians with new EV tooling and safety equipment that would allow them to do their jobs to a high standard. Additionally, the company has ensured each garage is equipped with EV diagnostics equipment to correctly assess and serve each electric vehicle that enters their garages.

Accident management review

Rivus completed a comprehensive review of its accident management proposition, to ensure it could service drivers that had experienced road accidents in their electric vehicle. More than 80% of the Rivus repair team has the capability to complete all levels of repairs to EVs, while

over half of its garages already have EV charge points on-site. Rivus' sister company AutoRestore® can also deliver mobile bodywork repairs to EVs for driver convenience.

Rolling out EVaaS

Rivus has completed a full market review of its products and services to ensure it can help businesses move towards a cleaner future through a single service provision. Once a consultation period has been completed with a customer, Rivus can offer electric fleet solutions in line with the customer's specific business requirements, thanks to a detailed assessment of the market's current models based on range, payload, and other factors.

Rivus EV expert Sarah Gray said: "Rivus has developed EVaaS to ensure customers have a single service provision for everything needed to successfully run an electric fleet.

"The fleet management world is evolving, and we know that sustainability is at the top of many businesses' agendas.

"It can be daunting deciding to switch to an electric vehicle for the first time, but we are confident that we can help customers find the right solution for their business, to ensure they minimise downtime, achieve their environmental targets, and their business goals.

"We have invested heavily into EVaaS to ensure our customers are informed, educated and supported throughout their journey to a part- or fully-electric fleet, meaning they continue to get their job done."

For further information go to rivusfleetsolutions.com/electric

Aggreko sets 2030 net-zero fleet goal

Vehicle fleet manager Sarina Vale reveals the company's global fleet strategy, cost-saving initiatives and its emphasis on safety measures. *Jess Maguire* reports

Aggreko UK, the supplier of temporary power generation and temperature control equipment, has commited to be net-zero by 2050. It has set an even earlier target for its fleet, with all cars and commercial vehicles (CVs) to be net zero by 2030.

Currently, hybrids comprise 68% of its company cars, while the journey to electrify its CVs is just beginning.

Vehicles accounted for 42% of Aggreko UK's CO_2 emissions output in 2020, making it a major focus for the business. The priority is for efficient and environmentally-friendly transport and travel.

To achieve net-zero by 2050, Aggreko has formed a working group looking at all areas of its operations including vehicles, the use of natural gases, fuels for its premises, refrigerant gases for units and electricity.

Following a two-month trial of a Ford Transit Custom van with a fully electric powertrain at its Washington depot, the company is looking to host further trials to gather data to investigate the best options for the business.

Sarina Vale, vehicle fleet manager at Aggreko, says: "We are reviewing our data and we will be relying on our fleet partners to provide us with support and guidance in terms of the expert outputs that we need to deliver electric vehicles (EVs) into the fleet."

Vale doesn't envisage an immediate switch to full electric, but by 2022 she aims to have at least 5% of the commercial fleet as either hybrid or EV and plans to phase in the new powertrain over the next nine years.

"I'm sure the journey isn't going to be completely pain-free. But I'm confident that whatever vehicles we have on board will suit our operating model effectively," she says.

Aggreko's fleet consists of 79 cars, from brands including BMW, Audi, Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Volvo and Toyota & Lexus; 80 light commercial vehicles (LCVs); 45 4x4s and 80 grey fleet vehicles. Its annual fleet mileage equals approximately 2.3m miles, emitting 1.1m $kgCO_2e$.

Vale described the fleet as 'stable' and doesn't expect it to reduce or increase in size over the next two-three years.

"It's natural for any business to experience loss of employees, but we would welcome anyone who wants to join our business at this exciting time. However, I don't think it's going to increase dramatically to make me overly concerned about where I'm going to source additional vehicles from," she says.

Aggreko's cars and commercial vehicles are currently fully managed by Lex Autolease, while the grey fleet is managed by The Miles Consultancy (TMC) via its Visa to Drive programme.

TMC checks whether grey fleet drivers' insurance is valid for business travel and ensures vehicles are taxed and MOTed.

Aggreko leases its vehicles as it provides the business with budgetary control, VAT benefits and convenience. However, it always keeps its funding options under review.

"Contract hire is the most beneficial to us. That's how our fleet is funded currently, however we are open to other funding methods, provided they meet our business requirements," Vale adds.

OPERATING CYCLES

The operating cycle for Aggreko's car fleet is around 48 months and 80,000 miles and 48 months and 100,000 miles for its LCVs and 4X4s, but the company takes a pragmatic approach to contracts.

"We set contracts based on actual activity to suit the role of our employees and we monitor them every six months," Vale says.

"We are open to reviewing our operating models provided it suits our business needs and provides the benefits we require. We're very receptive to new cycles and to review current practices."

During the height of pandemic restrictions, Aggreko saw a significant reduction in miles driven and saw an opportunity to reduce its operating costs through re-contracting vehicle mileages. In 2021 alone, Aggreko has saved more than

£11,000 through re-contracting its vehicles to generate rebates.

Last year, Aggreko worked with a team of consultants from Lex Autolease to review its fleet operation. A key part of the review was private mileage and how it reimbursed employees for using their own vehicles for business purposes.

The company found its policies to be outside best industry practices and made changes, switching from approved mileage allowance payment rates to advisory fuel rates.

As a result, this year Aggreko has saved more than £8,000 in fuel reimbursements.

The company has also generated savings from tendering its vehicle conversions and livery. It has saved £7,000, with this figure to increase over the next 12 months as Aggreko see new vehicles being delivered into the field.

It now works with Bott, manufacturer and supplier of in-vehicle equipment – a move that has shown significant savings across the fleet.

With Bott, the company has also recently introduced a new racking system to ensure any transported equipment is safely secured.

GLOBAL FLEET STRATEGY

Aggreko has its UK fleet strategy in place and is now in the process of creating a global fleet strategy with the goal of a harmonised operation in different countries and centralisation of how it manages the data.

"First, we need to understand how we operate globally as that dictates the activity I'll be involved in. The data is the most important element, but understanding how fleets are managed in those countries is equally important," Vale says.

"For example, how we manage our fleet in Senegal is completely different to how we would manage our fleet in Brazil. There are still localised practices and legislation that we need to abide by, but to give our support, expertise and time to help lead them into the harmonised operation, is the goal.

"The harmonised view of how we're operating will be invaluable. From there we can make informed decisions about vehicle cycles and how they operate. It may be the case areas do not need vehicles and can have other forms of transport such as bus services. The data in a globalised fleet strategy is the most important thing, as it will allow us to move into other areas of development."

The measurements of the global fleet strategy will be telematics data, reviewing driver behaviour, fuel loss, costs and sustainability based on miles per gallon (mpg).

To help develop the strategy, Vale has taken advice from leaders within Aggreko, considering their expectations, and she has also sought advice from industry contacts.

"There are several contacts I've connected with via LinkedIn and have openly asked questions about how they established their strategies, what worked well, what didn't – nothing is off the table," Vale adds.

"If we have a shared interest, I'm willing to engage with leaders who have gone through the process before, to gain advice and knowledge from them. We're all in the same position in terms of our goals and challenges. Peers and contacts are where I gain my knowledge and support from and that becomes invaluable. People may have ideas that I don't have and vice-versa, it's really important to learn from each other."

Having started as fleet manager at Aggreko in December 2017, Vale's role has since evolved to incorporate global travel, overseeing contracts including air, hotel, rail and short-term vehicle hire.

Her priority is to ensure they are fit for purpose to support the business by implementing efficiencies wherever required, as well as managing supplier relationships.

"It's equally challenging and exciting to be in such a role where there is so much change on the horizon, equally for both the fleet and travel categories. The way in which

we work and travel is ever changing, and the next three-to-five years I feel will be completely different to how we operate now," Vale says. "But I'm ready for the challenges that lie ahead. My motto is to remain positive, have a goal and focus in mind and move with the times."

ADOPTING AUTONOMOUS SAFETY SYSTEMS

In the future, Aggreko aims to move into the realm of connected cars for the benefits, such as connecting with drivers in real-time, providing alerts and data-gathering, provided it is safe and legal to do so.

"Technology to connect with vehicles to see how they operate is very important to get ahead of the curve of any cost or any failures. In terms of mobility, there's a long way to go.

"I don't think that we're quite there yet with introducing fully autonomous vehicles – that's five-to-10 years in the future," Vale adds.

With the motto, 'safety for life', Aggreko places safety and risk management at the heart of its operations.

Though telematics and a dedicated quality, safety, health and environment (QSHE) department, the company monitors employee driving styles, allowing line managers to provide feedback to drivers through dedicated one-to-one sessions.

Telematics aside, Aggreko has a working time directive policy in place to ensure drivers are aware of their responsibilities in terms of safety and to make it clear where they can report any concerns.

> "NO DAY IS THE SAME, THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO CHALLENGE YOU"
>
> **SARINA VALE, AGGREKO UK**

Recently, the QSHE team has successfully reinvigorated the reporting system, to enable Aggreko employees to report vehicle incidents effectively using an in-house developed app.

Aggreko also ensures vehicles are ventilated and equipped to protect drivers from spillages, as well as making sure vehicles are fit for purpose in line with the job role of the employee.

"We give employees a 'stop work' authority. If it isn't safe to work for whatever reason, report it and we will rectify whatever the problem may be," Vale says. "We give our people the opportunity to report any real-time incidents and we will repair those as necessary."

Vale also has a strategic monthly review with the QSHE department to identify any risks and issues regarding mpg and mileage.

Aggreko UK has 45 4x4s on it fleet

VALE ON...

... female leadership in what was a male-dominated industry

Sarina Vale has been involved in fleet since 2008. She started as a fleet analyst at HomeServe, where she progressed to the role of fleet manager. Prior to joining Aggreko UK, Vale had been fleet account manager at Carillion and fleet services manager at Palmer and Harvey.

She concedes it hasn't always been plain sailing for her as a female in an industry that is stereotypically considered 'male-dominated', but she has enjoyed the journey.

"It's been very positive journey; I've really enjoyed it. Fleet is quite varied, no day is the same, there's always something to challenge you and with the remit of fleet management, there's many different areas and projects that you can get involved in. I'm very lucky and proud to work and be supported by a business who are very dedicated to providing positive outcomes for our people and customers," Vale says.

"In terms of my leadership style, I'm quite open and flexible but also strategic and democratic. For any females coming into the industry, stay strong, be confident, know your subject, have courage of your convictions, and deliver results."

SEEKING ADVICE FROM PEERS

Along her journey, Vale has taken advice from her female industry peers to understand their journey, any obstacles they have faced and how they arrived at where they are now.

"In the last five years, more women leaders have entered the fleet industry; it's fantastic to see," says Vale.

"The 'male dominated' industry is dispersing, and women are playing a key role in it. My advice to any young females coming into the industry is, if you can manage people on all different levels and set expectations for those leaders, it goes a long way. Then establish what type of leader you want to be."

COMPANY: Aggreko UK
VEHICLE FLEET MANAGER: Sarina Vale
TIME IN ROLE: Three-and-a-half years
FLEET SIZE: 204: cars – 79; vans – 80; 4x4s – 45 (80 grey fleet vehicles)
FUNDING: Contract hire
OPERATING CYCLES: four years for cars and commercial vehicles
BRANDS: Vans – Ford, Nissan, Volkswagen, Renault; cars – Audi, BMW, Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Ford

'Companies look for convenience'

And the aim of those driving The Fuel Store is to ensure they get it. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Whenever fuel is mentioned in fleet circles, the conversation usually focuses on electrification and the upcoming ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles.

But this can overlook the ongoing importance of fossil fuels to the vast majority of fleets, with almost all company-owned vehicles still currently dependent on the oil-based products.

It is against this background that The Fuel Store, which was founded in 2016 by husband and wife Jamie and Mehma Bridgen, is pursuing a growth strategy that will see it double its customer base on a year-by-year basis.

It now has more than 30 members of staff and around 3,000 customers, with Jamie's father – former Fleetcor UK managing director Peter Bridgen – taking an advisory role with the company.

This growth strategy has seen it expand its range of products as well as its coverage: in May it added the Esso Card to its network, increasing its reach to cover two-thirds of the UK's fuel stations.

Combined with the Keyfuels network it already offered, its customers now have access to more than 6,500 fuel sites across the UK, including more than 1,000 Shell and 1,230 BP sites.

The offering will also help the company achieve its strategic objective of expanding into inner-city fuel sites.

"This has been on our radar for a while and we are excited to finally get it off the ground," says Jamie. "The clientele will be slightly different for the Esso Card as it's more focused on inner-city, local regional operators whereas the Keyfuels product is more national and for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)."

Traditionally, The Fuel Store has targeted small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) which operate HGVs and light commercial vehicles (LCVs), and The Esso Card will support its vision by extending its reach into the car fleet market, he adds.

"The Esso Card takes us into a different space," says Peter. "We are clearly focused on SME and that will continue, but The Fuel Store card is becoming more attractive to more types and sizes of fleets.

"The thing companies are looking for before anything else, I believe, and have been for a long time, is convenience.

"And convenience comes with what networks you offer: the first question I would ask as a driver

The husband and wife team of Jamie and Mehma Bridgen launched The Fuel Store five years ago

ORGANISATION: The Fuel Store
FOUNDERS: Jamie and Mehma Bridgen
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 30
NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS: 3,000
FUEL CARDS OFFERED: Key Fuels, Esso Card
OTHER KEY SERVICES: Telematics, fraud prevention

> "OUR AIM IS TO BE PREPARED SO WHEN OUR CUSTOMERS TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL FUELS TO NEW FUELS, WE ARE ABLE TO FACILITATE THAT"
>
> **JAMIE BRIDGEN, THE FUEL STORE**

of an HGV, van or car is 'where can I fill up?'.

"The Esso Card takes us up to around 6,500 sites and if you consider that the total number of filling stations in the UK is about 8,400, we can offer really good coverage."

The Fuel Store has also extended its products beyond solely fuel cards to increase its appeal to potential customers. It now offers FraudGuard, which is designed to keep customers protected from fraudulent activity on fuel cards, and last year it launched a telematics-based fleet management solution in partnership with Trakm8. The latter incorporates fuel spend management and data insights on both driver and vehicle performance.

"As with any sector, data is becoming the key to success," says Jamie. "And for us, it was about how do we deliver that data in a meaningful way to our customers? How do we allow them to make better decisions?

"Telematics gives you access to so much data and it was about how we could pull together the fuel expense data with the telematics data to give customers the insights to really understand how their vehicles and drivers are performing.

"It also lets them see whether a vehicle needs a service or maintenance any time soon."

Not all SMEs are as aware of telematics and the benefits the technology can have as large fleets are, he adds, so it has been important for The Fuel Store to educate its customers about it.

"It's also about understanding what the customer's requirements are because it's wrong to throw data at someone which they probably won't understand completely or, in a lot of cases, won't need," says Peter.

"It's about matching their requirements with the data you have to help them concentrate on the areas that need improvements to make their fleet more efficient."

The Fuel Store is looking at ways it can enhance its telematics offering through other complementary services, such as a maintenance solution.

It is also currently developing a "data product" which it hopes to launch later this year, as well as working on a partnership with an insurance company where it can provide details to its customers on what policies are available.

"We won't be selling the insurance ourselves because we would have to be FCA-regulated, but we want to be able to offer a route to those solutions to our customers," says Jamie.

"There are also other solutions, such as leasing, we're looking to introduce.

"There are a few businesses out there that we could partner with that we already have good relationships with, so for us it is really looking at what solutions our customers require and we can provide them with, with one point of contact."

While fuel cards for petrol and diesel and associated products may be key to The Fuel Store's immediate success, Jamie says the company is also working to be ready for the widespread shift to electric vehicles and the change this will have on the services it offers.

"It's key to be agile," he adds. "Our aim is to be prepared so when our customers transition from traditional fuels to new fuels, we are able to facilitate that.

"We are not a fuel card company, we are a fuel card reseller. We're not a creator of these big solutions, but we are a solutions reseller and the idea is always to make those solutions better with the service that we provide to our customers."

BOUNCING BACK POST-LOCKDOWN

The Covid-19 pandemic was a potential spanner in the works of The Fuel Store's growth plans and, after the first week of the initial lockdown last year, its customers' fuel spend dropped 50%.

"If you talk to any other business across the fuel card sector, they'll tell you the same story or worse," says Peter Bridgen.

"But within a week or so of the end of the first lockdown, the spend went back to normal and we are now significantly above where we were before the first lockdown."

Jamie adds: "Everybody has been hit by Covid. We weren't used to home working at the time, but we adjusted to that within three days and everybody was able to work at home.

"Last year gave us the opportunity to think and plan a lot.

"It changed customer behaviours as well and now they're looking at how they boost off from this lockdown. How do they focus and grow the business back to where it should be?

"The need for convenience is even more prominent now because businesses are looking at 'we've got a number of issues to solve, we don't really want fuel expenditure to be one of those issues'."

Mark Cartwright holds the trophy. He is flanked by Andrew Brown, Calm; Fiona Pick, Highways England; and Mark Trimmer, Driving for Better Business

WINNER: HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

JUDGES' COMMENTS
In a very difficult year, Highways England has looked at the most important part of a vehicle – the driver – and created an inspirational service to tackle mental health. Highways England's campaign promotes the wellbeing of drivers in an area that is often misunderstood, overlooked or ignored. A worthy winner.

Initiative to address the incidences of drivers contemplating suicide gets the judges' votes. *Stephen Briers* reports

Eighteen months in and Mark Cartwright is making his mark on the commercial vehicle incident prevention team at Highways England. As anyone who knows him will testify, that means putting vans firmly on the agenda.

"We have had a switch of emphasis," the incident prevention team leader concedes. "Previously most activities were about heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and vehicle condition, such as safe loading and tyre management. We still do this, but now we spend more time on light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and on how we can influence driver behaviour."

Cartwright's been here before, of course, as the architect of the Logistics UK (then the Freight Transport Association) Van Excellence programme. Now, in addition to broadening Highways England's output, he recently collected a Fleet News Awards trophy for the outstanding product/service of the year in recognition of the CALM Driver initiative.

His team is tasked with reducing and mitigating incidents on the strategy road network involving commercial vehicles. He oversees "14 or 15" projects at any one time with an objective of taking them through to completion and then handing over to be "business as usual" within Highways England.

Fleet News: How did CALM Driver came about?
Mark Cartwright: We regularly have suicides on our network and we already do a lot of work with the Samaritans, including signposting their advice lines. The most difficult suicides to quantify are the ones where people drive into something. CALM Driver was triggered by the realisation that the demographics of suicide being men under 50 fits with commercial vehicle drivers, including being lone workers, spending nights way, not being the biggest earners and having the pressures of time and the actual driving. According to Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures, van drivers are 25% more likely and truck drivers 20% more likely to take their own lives than the rest of the population. CALM Driver is our way to raise awareness about this issue. Calm (Campaign Against Living Miserably) already does a lot with businesses, but the information is office-based, and a lot of drivers don't go to the office, so we wanted to reach them.

FN: What does the programme involve?
MC: We have created a pack to start the conversation and have given out 35,000 so far. The types of businesses requesting them are everything from major corporations asking for several thousand to individual drivers wanting one. Those packs have probably resulted in a couple of thousand calls to Calm and they will have saved lives.

FN: Consumer media often refer to Operation Tramline as the 'spy in the cab', but you're very open about your collaboration with the police.
MC: We provide HGV cabs for the police to use as camera platforms and I'm happy to bust some myths including telling people where they are – we are not hiding them. They are also not about just targeting HGVs; in fact, the indiscretions we pick up are around 40% HGV, 30% van and 30% car. And, at least half the time, they have words of advice not prosecutions. By far the biggest issue is distraction of some sort, mostly mobile phones. Then it's HGV drivers not wearing seat belts. We now have a laminate card saying, "please put your seat belt on"!

FN: This isn't your only bluelight collaboration...
MC: That's right, we have ongoing activity with the police because we have no enforcement power. We're working with Merseyside Police, Greater Manchester Police and Cheshire Police to help them be more mobile in their enforcement instead of going to the same spots all the time. We've given them some mobile weight pads and Kier has provided a welfare van and it is showing dividends in identifying loading discrepancies, especially with LCV activities.

Highways England has several projects due to be announced in the coming months, including a van driver toolbox kit in association with Driving for Better Business, the Government-backed road risk programme. It will provide best practice advice and legal information on a range of activities, such as safe parking and loading. The rest, for now, are strictly off the record, but they will have a massive impact on safety, including helping companies to better manage their fleets.

However, ask Cartwright about his ultimate ambition and he gives a memorable sound bite: "I want to professionalise the role of the van driver."

■ To learn more about CALM Driver, go to drivingforbetterbusiness.com/calmdriver. Resources are free, although there is an honesty box for contributions which go to Calm.

What telematics can do for your fleet

Sustainability is a hot topic in the fleet industry. With our long-term impact on the environment in mind, the importance of driving change is greater than ever. And as we move closer to the UK's net zero by 2050 target, reducing road transport emissions is a must.

The good news is we can act for change. Small steps like understanding your telematics can provide the insight needed to optimise your fleet and help reduce road transport emissions. Plus, it'll help you push your fleet towards sustainability without overhauling your organisation's operations.

Why use telematics?

When it comes to reducing emissions, introducing telematics can be one of the most impactful changes you can make. Here's how telematics could help you revolutionise your fleet's performance.

1. Assess your suitability to switch

If you're weighing up the switch to electric, telematics can help in your initial suitability assessment. Existing fleet telematics can show if an electric fleet is right for your business, what type of vehicles will fit your commercial requirements, and even where your charge points should be based.

2. Track mission-critical data

If the benefits stack up and you go ahead with fleet electrification, your telematics could become a powerful tool. They can help you monitor energy consumption, battery charge, and manage traffic and route planning. Proactive route planning can also help mitigate against any range anxiety that you may feel in the early days.

3. Inform greater efficiency

Telematics is key to monitoring driver behaviour and creating sustainable driving habits. For example, telematics can identify issues like harsh braking or acceleration. Driver behaviour is crucial to optimising the efficiency of an EV, and telematics can provide the necessary information as drivers adjust to EV driving.

4. Identify issues early

One of the biggest challenges faced in managing a vehicle fleet is dealing with unexpected repairs and maintenance. And with dashboard warning lights often unreported by drivers, little problems can snowball fast. Fleet telematics gives you instant alerts and information on vehicle performance – from battery condition to fault codes. So fleet managers can react to problems, arrange repairs and get vehicles back on the road quickly.

Want to know more?

Join us and the fleet community from 11 to 22 October for a fortnight of virtual networking, professional development, innovations and more at The EV Fleet Academy.

Pre-register today
energy.drax.com/fleet-academy

We're Drax

We offer a unique end-to-end partnership approach to electrification that supports businesses every step of the way.

As experts in energy and EV markets, we're perfectly positioned to help organisations build on their sustainability ambitions through fleet electrification.

drax | Electric Vehicles

Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

PLUG INTO NET ZERO THINKING

How fleets can make the next move to decarbonisation

THE JOURNEY TO ELECTRIC

With transport being the major contributor to our emissions, we need to clean up how we travel if the UK is to meet its national net zero targets. The recent publication of the transport decarbonisation plan sets out the Government's intentions for the sector. It confirms the target end dates for sales of all new non-zero emission road vehicles: 2030 for cars and vans, 2035 for hybrids, and 2040 for HGVs.

The dates are ambitious but, we believe, very achievable. In fact, many fleets have already committed to transition to zero emissions and are beginning to enjoy the benefits.

With only a couple of vehicle replacement cycles left before 2030, now is a good time to take stock of what's been achieved so far, reflect on lessons learned, and consider recent developments so that the next phase of transitioning to an alternatively fuelled fleet runs seamlessly.

THREE CORE THEMES
THAT WILL HELP GUIDE YOUR JOURNEY

To date, many fleet managers have successfully implemented robust electric vehicle (EV) policies and have moved perk drivers into zero or low emission vehicles. But what next? When we reflect on these achievements, three core themes stand out that will help you shape your future fleet decarbonisation plans:

1. IDENTIFYING BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Typically, perk drivers are the easiest to transition. With limited business mileage and greater access to off-street parking and home charging, this group embraced the switch because of the attractive tax savings, plus the added benefit of reduced fuel costs for private motoring.

Concerns other drivers have had about on-demand access to vehicles, which for fleet means continuous mobility during working hours, are being alleviated by a maturing EV market. New electric model releases offer improved range, and the infrastructure is making headway, which means the barriers are falling away. Of course, there is still work to be done, but the market is making impressive progress.

2. SEGMENTING THE FLEET

The technological advances mean many non-perk vehicles are ready for transition, which means fleet managers can now take a serious look at other parts of their fleets. By segmenting the driver population according to behaviour and needs, you can prioritise the transition as the availability of enhanced vehicle technology and improved infrastructure continues to roll out. This is a staggered approach of matching drivers to advances in EVs that work for them.

3. SETTING AND MONITORING AMBITIOUS DECARBONISATION GOALS

It's important you know where you're heading. Before setting clear decarbonisation goals, you must understand your starting point and carbon footprint aspirations.

That way, you can plan your deliverables and timeframes before developing your roadmap. By identifying the barriers and logically segmenting your fleet, you can create a targeted transition pathway.

The approach Zenith takes to help fleet managers navigate this pathway includes:

- Profiling your current fleet at asset level (car, van, truck), drilling down to operational and business travel requirements, and assigning vehicle segments
- Monitoring suitability of current and upcoming alternatively fuelled vehicles (AFV)
- Setting your net zero target date
- Producing a focused plan that transitions the segments where EVs or AFVs are already a suitable match.

This approach enables you to drive out the additional steps needed to solve the more difficult segments, while remaining focused on the overall corporate goal of achieving net zero by your target date.

NEW FUNDING STREAMS AND MEASURES

Cars are the transport sector's biggest CO_2-emitting culprit. They contribute 13% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Switching these vehicles to electric will provide a faster route to a cleaner UK vehicle parc.

Alongside the transport decarbonisation plan, and to help the industry focus and accelerate the reduction in GHG emissions, the Government published the combined 2035 delivery plan. This focused plan establishes funding streams and measures for decarbonising cars and vans, including key timelines, milestones and annual reporting commitments.[1]

2021

A published Hydrogen Strategy

to develop the UK's hydrogen economy

2022

A pledge for £582 million investment

for the plug-in grants to reduce zero-emission vehicle prices until at least 2022/23

2024

A new road vehicle CO_2 emissions regulatory regime

Continued grant funding for chargepoints

in homes, workplaces and on-street until at least 2024/2025

2025

Favourable company car tax rates

until at least March 2025 for zero-emission vehicles

These announcements ensure fleets that move to electric will still see the short-term tax benefits, and will receive assistance to install the necessary charging infrastructure.

[1]Referenced from GOV.UK

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

The sector is already on the move. The overall UK car parc is now roughly 6-7% EV. At the time of writing, our EV car and van order bank sits at over 31%, and our salary sacrifice fleet orders at 65%. That means that our own EV100 target to transition the vehicles we procure for customers to EVs by 2030 is well underway.

82.3%

EV orders for combined car and van in June 2021.

A key Zenith corporate customer has seen steady growth in their electric orders over the past 12 months, reaching over 82% in June 2021.

We're not just witnessing a transition for their softer targets, but the start of a process to move their entire van fleet to EVs as swiftly as possible.

We are working with this customer to map the transition pathway for the various asset classes and advising on the viability of accelerating the move for their commercial vehicles.

CASE STUDY

85% OF DRIVERS SELECT BEV

Drivers voted with their feet when one of our key customers embarked on what they felt was an incredibly ambitious journey. They opened their policy to allow drivers to trade up to EV. Within six months, the business saw 85% of drivers selecting a battery electric vehicle (BEV). In addition, the company is reporting a consistent wave of cash takers making the move back to company cars.

While this was a bold step, the customer found it to be much easier than predicted. They also discovered that 'range anxiety' (often cited as the top concern when considering EVs) didn't materialise. In fact, only one driver raised concerns, which were easily resolved with some clear driving advice.

WHAT'S NEXT?

It's clear that fleet managers can, and must, be more ambitious and focused when it comes to delivering the corporate sustainability agenda and hitting the new targets set out in the Government's transport decarbonisation plan.

With our extensive insight and experience in supporting customers to take their first steps towards lower emission vehicles, we are the perfect partner to help you develop a pathway to achieve your ultimate goal of a zero-emission fleet.

JOIN US FOR VISION

Live webinar - Making sense of: EV fleet policy
30th September, 11am
Register today at zenith.co.uk/futurefleet

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Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

REALLOCATE TO ACCUMULATE

A common decision fleet managers have to make is what to do with vehicles which become spare. This may be for a number of reasons: an employee may have taken a new job, redundancies, or a company may be restructuring.

Whatever the reason, a vehicle becoming spare leaves an organisation with two options: defleet so it operates only the number of vehicles it needs or redeploy to another driver elsewhere in their organisation.

"The downside of the latter is the company is still paying the rent while waiting for the changeover," says Ashley Barnett, leader, consultancy at Lex Autolease.

"There may be a month's wait before the new driver comes on board, then they have to get the car to that person, and that is before even considering the need to valet it, do a service check and generally make sure it is fit to be used as a second-hand vehicle."

Lex Autolease uses logistics businesses to handle this and will manage the pool for customers, but "sometimes they don't want the hassle and would rather incur the slightly higher cost of terminating early and making the incoming driver happy with a new vehicle, particularly where the early termination cost is low".

However, keeping hold of the vehicles and running a reallocation list effectively has many advantages: not least avoiding the early termination charges and having the ability to provide mobility to staff at short notice.

"There's always a perception that it's a pain in the neck to do this, but, essentially, you have a stock of vehicles and, although you are charged a little bit for storage, that acts as a kind of driver for you to move the vehicle on," says Peter Kowalcyzk, fleet manager at Inspired Gaming, which uses BBS Fleet Logistics to manage its reallocation vehicles.

"Our new starters begin on a trial period and what you don't want is to get them a new vehicle only for them to leave in three months' time.

"Having a stock of vehicles you can reallocate to people, when needed, is always really handy, and in situations where you do have an urgent requirement for a vehicle on a temporary basis, potentially you can just use something that is in storage.

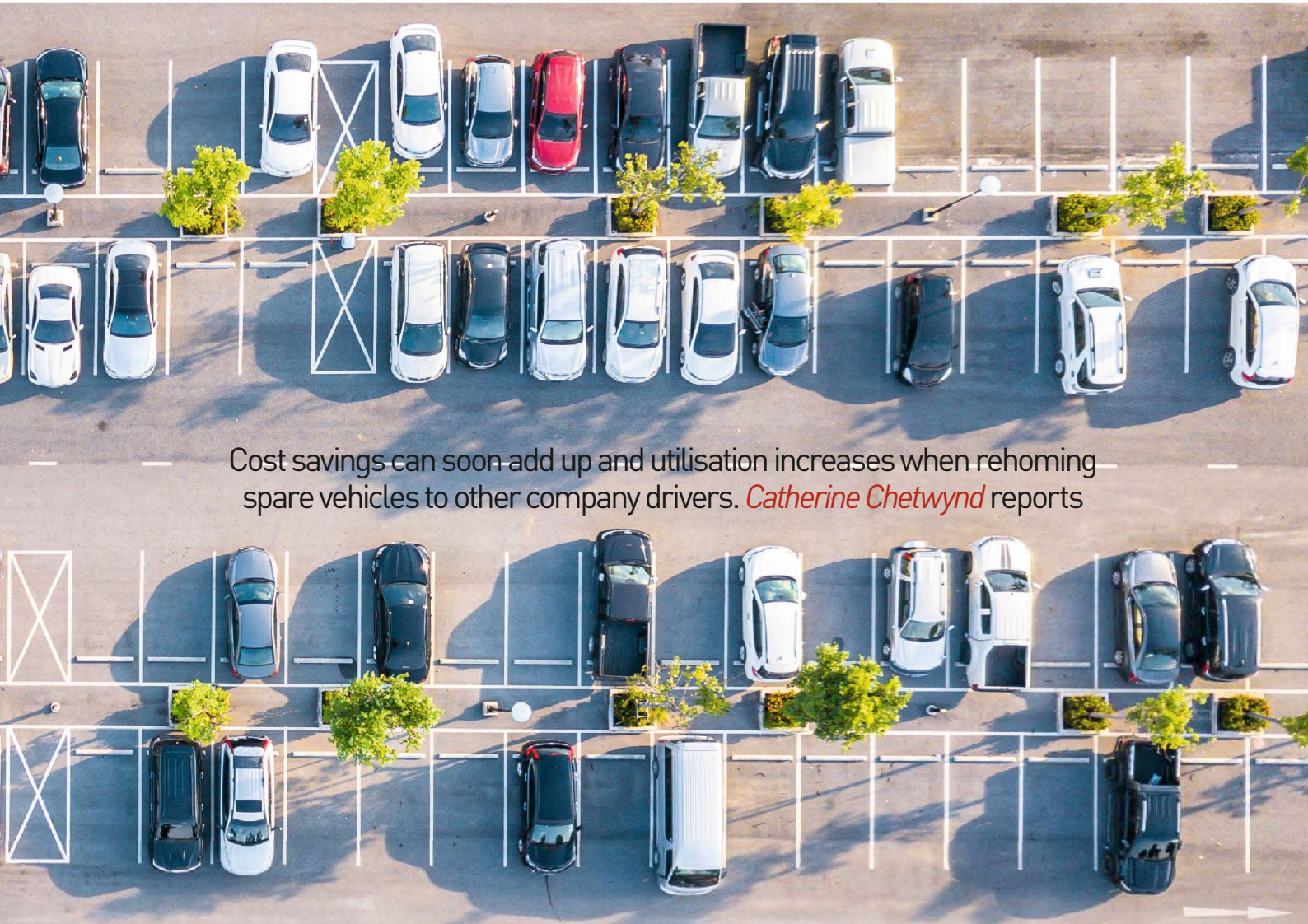
"We can get a vehicle delivered easily within a couple of days."

Inspired Gaming, which has a fleet of around 570 cars and vans, typically has around eight cars in storage waiting to be reallocated at any one time.

RENTAL ALMOST ELIMINATED

Close Brothers, which also uses BBS Fleet Logistics, usually has around 20 vehicles waiting for new drivers and has used these to significantly reduce its use of rental cars since introducing a vehicle reallocation programme around five years ago.

Close Brothers head of fleet Steve Cuddy says: "Our new starters have to go on a six-month probation before we allow them to order a perma-



Cost savings can soon add up and utilisation increases when rehoming spare vehicles to other company drivers. *Catherine Chetwynd* reports

nent company car. We had been using long-term hires during this time, but that was getting expensive and they had to change the cars over every month or two, and it just became a mess.

"At one point with the hire cars, I put them out as six-month rentals so it was almost like a mini-lease but, sometimes within a month, the rental company said it had sold the car and then the changeover interferes with the employee's working day.

"They may have to take a day off, or wait for it to be swapped over, and having multiple cars doesn't look good to the new starter either."

Cuddy says Close then took on some pool cars to allocate to new staff, but began using BBS Fleet Logistics to manage its spare vehicles after recognising an issue it had managing these after drivers had received their new cars.

Being able to reallocate its spare vehicles means it "barely uses" rental now, says Cuddy. "We use it for breakdown, accident management and that sort of stuff, everything else goes through BBS and the spare car pool," he adds.

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

As well as to new starters, spare vehicles can also be allocated to existing staff members to replace their own cars, whether it is on a short-term basis while their own vehicle is, for example, off the road for repairs, longer term as a replacement for their own car that is at end of lease, or switched from a high-mileage driver to a low-mileage one to ensure the vehicle doesn't go above its contracted mileage.

One problem fleet decision-makers may face with this is resistance from drivers who may not be happy taking delivery of a used car, as opposed to a new one.

An older vehicle may emit more CO_2 than a newer one, meaning the driver could face higher benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax, particularly if the fleet has recently adopted a plug-in hybrid or BEV-only policy for new cars and the employee is being offered a petrol or diesel model.

There are ways of making the offer more attractive, of course. For example, offering the driver a car from a higher grade such as an Audi A4 instead of the A3 they would be entitled to, or by providing an extra cash sum per month.

With this, it's a matter of maths. If it will cost £3,000 to terminate a lease three years early, but the company needs to pay an employee £100 a month extra to take the car, plus national insurance contributions (NICs), it would cost less to hand in the lease prematurely.

But "the line between an essential business user, a tool to do the job and a perk is becoming increasingly blurred, so there is almost a sense of entitlement and even the essential business user has an element of choice, so if they might have had a Ford Focus they could get a BMW 1 Series by paying a bit more," says Barnett.

Reallocation is easier if the business can tell ➲

ISTOCK/PIGPHOTO

drivers 'you will get this car, with this spec and in this colour'.

Some companies make it clear they reserve the right to allocate an available vehicle rather than order a new one.

Caroline Sandall, specialist consultant at LeasePlan UK, recommends creating a decision-tree to determine whether a car should be kept.

"This will change over time when the organisation expects an influx of new starters or sees a hiring freeze; in every case, reallocation of vehicles should be reassessed according to the context," she says. "Very large vehicles or those that have a high BIK rate can be particularly difficult to reallocate; it may be more cost-effective to return the car and pay the early termination fee."

MITIGATE TRIBULATIONS

To some degree, fleet managers can mitigate the worst reallocation tribulations by defining their company car list closely, still allowing employees some choice, but not total freedom.

"While a more open company car list provides employees with a wealth of options for how they tailor their vehicle, this also increases the chances of weird and wonderful selections of colour and so on being added to the fleet," says Nick Bartley, head of corporate and international account management at Alphabet GB.

"It's nearly always trickier to tempt an employee to take a bright yellow reallocation vehicle than a black or silver one."

The same goes for wholelife cost policies and CO_2 emission caps; if a driver is allowed to order a high CO_2 vehicle and then leaves, it can be costly to reallocate this due to the higher BIK.

"Because of this, it's often sensible to consider a level of restriction in fleet policies, whether in manufacturer selection or just colour choice," adds Bartley.

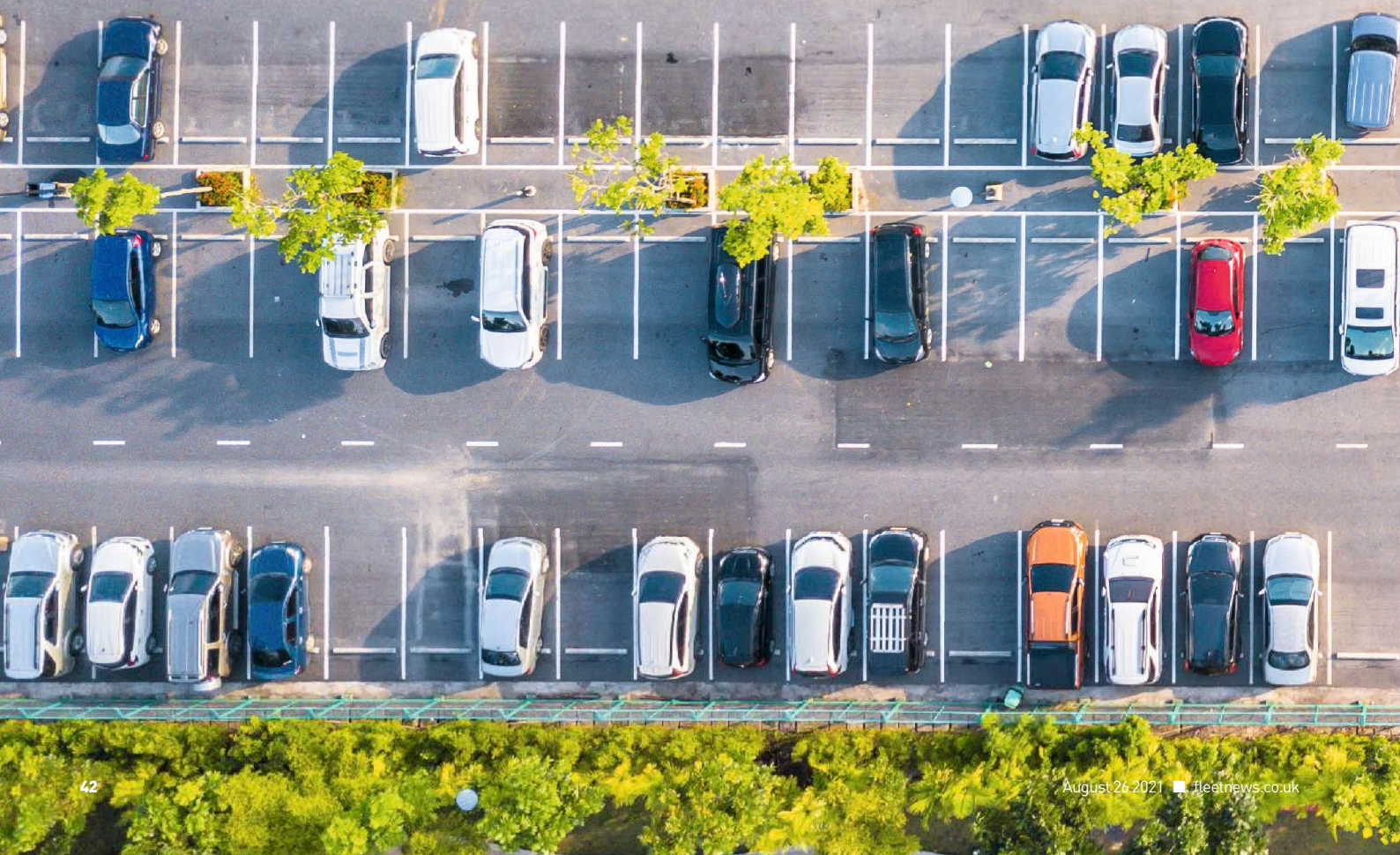
Both Close and Inspired Gaming have reasonably standardised choice lists, which ensures vehicles can be easily reallocated as the financial impact on drivers is insignificant.

"When we put a vehicle list together, we look at the impact of the combined CO_2 and P11D price on the monthly cost for that driver to make sure the choice is within a similar sort of band," says Kowalcyzk.

"The bulk of our drivers are job-need and they generally have the same kind of vehicle anyway, usually in the same colour but, even if not, it's effectively a vehicle that's fit for the job.

"In some cases, you may have drivers that say 'well, (a re-allocated car) is a lot more in terms of tax', but, actually, when you calculate the figure for them, it may be £7 a month, and they'll say they're not bothered by that.

"You may have other people that are in the process of choosing a new car and until they get it



we provide them with a reallocated vehicle.

"We can say 'look, you will only have this for x amount of time and by the time you come to choose your vehicle, there'll be a much broader range which will be a lot more tax efficient."

He adds: "Historically, we have two or three grades of management and we've had situations where somebody in a senior management vehicle has left and we've had their vehicle for another couple of years.

"In those circumstances, if we've got a space to reallocate that to somebody lower down the chain we would potentially offer them that vehicle.

"In those instances, it's kind of a 'look, would you like the vehicle, but there will be a cost attached to the car', so it has to be someone who is prepared to take on the BIK.

"We have to do that within reason, because it can't look like we're giving a junior employee some amazing vehicle."

One potential drawback of offering a restricted car choice list to aid reallocation could be an impact on recruiting and retaining staff, says Sandall.

"That could be to the detriment of the wider policy," she adds. "This is particularly true while technology, specifically electric vehicles, is constantly evolving, when having a higher turnover of cars may not necessarily be a bad thing, enabling fleets to keep up with developments and take on cars that are better for the environment."

VEHICLE CONDITION

If a fleet re-allocates spare vehicles, it needs to ensure these are in an appropriate condition for a new owner as well as ensuring the maintenance is up to date.

Valeting is an essential part of this. "It sends an important message to the driver about the standards to which they are expected to maintain the vehicle and also contributes to their acceptance of a reallocated vehicle," says Paul Hyne, commercial director at Arval UK.

Cuddy adds: "When a vehicle is still in contract and its driver has left, we'll get our supplier to collect the vehicle and when it goes into storage they will check it over both from a maintenance point of view and also look at any possible damage, highlighting any work that needs to be done.

"They'll show us a picture of the damage and give us what is almost like a price sheet so we can choose what to have done.

"We have the vehicle returned to BVRLA fair wear and tear standard guidelines and BBS lets us know once the vehicle is ready.

"From that point on we will look to get them to redeliver to a different driver."

Cuddy says staff turnover means cars are not sat in storage for more than two weeks after they are repaired and prepared for their new driver. "Utilisation is pretty good on average," he adds.

Plan your visit to

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

Sign up now for two days of priceless fleet insight, curated by leading fleet and HR managers, to address current fleet issues and long-term challenges

Delegates attending Fleet & Mobility Live this year will gain access to expert sessions offering vital insight on how to make the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), as well as how to use data and telematics to improve fleet efficiency.

This year's free-to-attend show at the NEC on October 5-6 will be the first big opportunity for the fleet industry to gather face-to-face again to hear expert insights, share best practice, speak with new suppliers and catch up with colleagues.

Olly Craughan, DPD head of corporate social responsibility, will explain how he made the business case to boost the UK's delivery company's fleet from 139 to more than 1,100, a 600% increase, in a year-and-a-half.

Multi-Fleet News Awards winner Shaun Atton, head of fleet and facilities at Auto Windscreens and Peter Kelly, Elis Group compliance and fleet manager, will also be presenting at this year's show with case studies on making the most out of telematics.

Atton and Kelly will show how fleets can pull together all types of vehicle management data to make dramatic improvements in efficiency, safety and sustainability.

Both sessions are part of the Operational Excellence Theatre, which will deliver multiple "how to" sessions. This is in addition to the latest thinking on the future of fleet with Strategy sessions, as well useful tips on salary sacrifice and mobility in the new Benefits Box Theatre.

When: October 5-6, 2021
Where: NEC, Birmingham
Entry: Free to fleet, HR & finance managers
Details: fleetandmobilitylive.com

From the 2019 show

EXHIBITORS BOOKED SO FAR

Aids Fuel Oils Group Alfa Fleet Services Ltd Alphabet (GB) Limited ARI Athlon Autoserve Dropless Eco Chargepoints UK Engineius Fleet Operations FleetCheck Ford Motor Company Masternaut Nexus Vehicle Rental Northgate Vehicle Hire Quartix Vehicle Tracking

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Making the business case for EVs

DPD has confirmed plans to deliver to 25 of the largest towns and cities in the UK via zero and low-emission methods by 2025. Oxford has already gone live as DPD's first all-electric city, with nine further UK 'green cities' to be confirmed this year.

It means its head of corporate social responsibility Olly Craughan has had to become well versed in putting together the business case for electric vehicles (EVs).

Although, he says DPD UK was already on the front foot due to parent company La Poste having total buy-in on the transition to zero emissions. The business has backed the switch to EVs with an £111 million investment so far.

Craughan says: "Our board has wanted to do this because it's the right thing to do environmentally, but also commercially. So we're starting from a place where transitioning the fleet to EV is understood from the top. Having said that, I think it's also important to communicate that electrifying your fleet isn't going to be easy.

"It helps that we're already a data-driven company, so making the case for EVs is made simpler when you're collecting data on routing and mileage to help really dig in the details."

Craughan says delegates attending his FML presentation will all be in the same boat of either ramping up their EV orders, or will be seriously considering adding their first plug-in vehicles.

> "THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS EXTRACTING ALL THE DATA YOU HAVE"
>
> **PETER KELLY, ELIS**

He says: "I hope my presentation will generate some thought-provoking discussion around the challenges of electrification. One of the biggest is still factoring in charging with how that will impact your business operationally.

"It's about not being overwhelmed and trying to do everything at once. You have to start with a catalyst like aiming for that first EV order, or your first 100 EVs so you can make that transition more manageable.

"I'll be taking a look at the total cost of the ownership (TCO) piece and how to set a budget to work within. The session will also look at how important it is to have buy-in from all key stakeholders, including drivers, and making sure they're engaged with the journey every step of the way."

BEYOND TELEMATICS

Both Atton and Kelly will offer deep dive case studies into how they have successfully used telematics and data to better their fleets.

While both will be focussing primarily on how telematics systems can help improve petrol and diesel fleets, using data to manage vehicles will become even more important as more and more car and van fleets switch to EVs in the future.

Atton says: "My presentation will look at how to best integrate multiple systems, sorting through the amount of data you'll have and using it to help coach drivers.

"Telematics shouldn't be used as a big brother device and it's not about a hitting stick. You can reward the really good drivers.

"Those attending the show will be able to come away with some practical tips and advice on how they can get the most out of their current systems and how they can better leverage all the data they have at their disposal."

Elis has already seen dramatic results and big savings due to focussing on getting the most out of its telematics and camera systems.

The company has made a £1.2m reduction in insurance claims in just one year, as well as a 98% reduction in speeding incidents within a week of going live.

This is a result of linking in telematics data with the camera systems Elis uses across its fleet.

Kelly says: "The most important thing is extracting all the data you have, integrating systems so you're dealing with one or as few systems as possible and being able to interrogate it on a regular basis.

"I also think maintaining momentum is really important. When you start embedding telematics and data reporting, there will be a big impact at first, but that energy can start to falter."

DECISION-MAKERS GROWING IN CONFIDENCE, SAYS SURVEY

But significant challenges remain for fleets post-pandemic lockdown. *Stephen Briers* reports

Optimism is rising among UK fleet decision-makers as the country exits lockdown, although they continue to face several significant challenges, including long delays on car and van orders due to the semiconductor and components shortages.

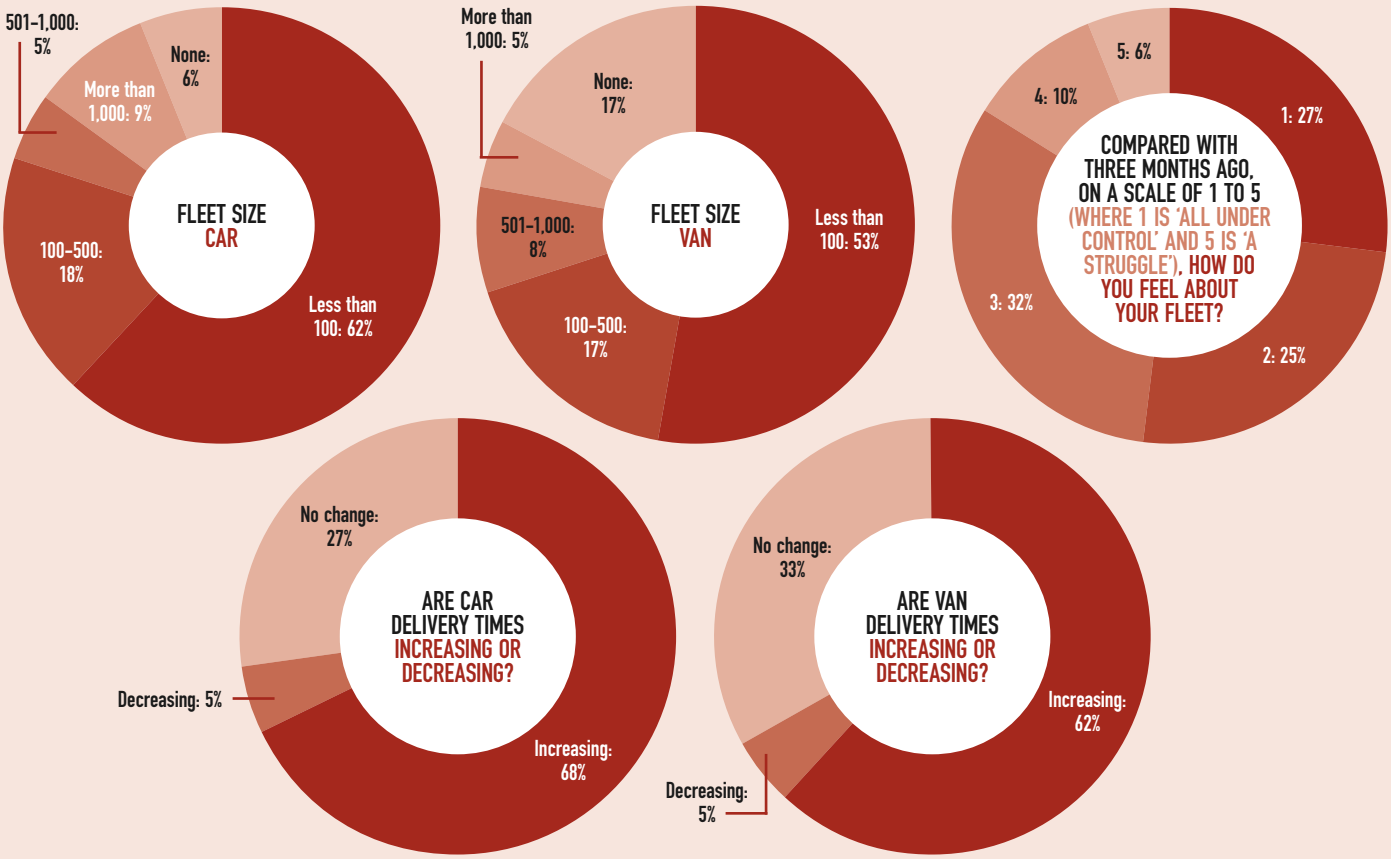
More than a quarter (27%) of respondents to a *Fleet News* Barometer survey sponsored by Athlon said their fleet was under control compared with three months ago, while a further quarter felt largely upbeat about their business activities. Almost a third (32%) had mixed views, while 16% felt keeping control of operational demands was still a real struggle.

The survey asked a range of questions about fleet confidence, but also about risk and safety policies, funding and cash allowances.

More than half (53%) of respondents have seen no change to their car fleet size over the past three months, while 27.5% have increased their car fleet and 19.5% are running fewer vehicles. While a similar proportion (54%) do not anticipate any growth over the next three months, there is generally greater optimism with almost 36% anticipating their car fleet size will be bigger by the end of the next quarter and just 10% expecting it to shrink.

Larger companies – those with more than 100 vehicles – and organisations in the transport, retail, distribution and construction industries are typically most confident about future fleet growth, while the public sector is least optimistic.

This bullish view is potentially being fuelled by the increase in electric cars with their attractive benefit-in-kind (BIK) rates, which some companies report is bringing cash takers back into the company car scheme.



The Pulse insight report from *Fleet News* sister company Fleet Intelligence reveals that employees choosing to move from cash to car is the biggest driver of fleet growth, following a company decision to encourage staff back into the car scheme.

However, while fewer than half the fleets answering the Athlon-sponsored survey (42%) offer cash allowances, of those that do, 40% say uptake has increased over the past year with 37% expecting this trend to continue over the next 12 months.

Just 10% say their cash fleet has reduced in size although 16% expect to see reductions over the coming year.

It places increasing pressure on grey fleet management skills, with companies requiring robust controls to ensure compliance. These typically include licence checks and maintaining records of key documentation including MOTs, insurance and servicing.

Some fleets also place restrictions on choice, such as age, body type or CO_2 emissions – the latter is important under the Greenhouse Gas reporting scheme which requires large companies and public sector organisations to report their CO_2 emissions. Grey fleet falls under scope 3 of the regulations.

Annual business mileage plays a part in 36% of fleets' decisions about company car eligibility. A quarter have a 10,000 annual business mileage cap, above which employees must go into the car scheme, while 7% set the threshold at 8,000 and 4% at 5,000.

However, 64% do not have a mileage cap – this includes a mix of those who leave the choice between cash and car entirely to the employee and those who do not offer a cash option.

Companies offering cash as an option most commonly base their allowance calculations on what competitors are doing – 34% say they benchmark other companies, with 25% using total cost of ownership modelling and 19.5% effective rental.

Among the other methods stated are: based on individuals' roles/user grade, historic rate and a mix of everything.

FUEL REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement for fuel used by staff using their own vehicles for business purposes is a two-way choice between the Approved Mileage Allowance Payment (AMAP), currently 45p per mile for the first 10,000 and 25ppm thereafter, and a straight pence per mile (PPM).

The majority of respondents – 64% – opt for PPM which will be lower than the AMAP rate, although employees may be able to get tax relief (mileage allowance relief) on any unused balance of the approved amount.

Supply remains a pressing issue as companies battle lengthening vehicle delivery dates caused by the shortage in semiconductors and other components. More than two-thirds (68%) say lead times for cars are rising.

VAN FLEET SIZE

The picture on fleet size is equally mixed for light commercial vehicles, despite the much-publicised increase in demand for home deliveries forcing many companies to rapidly upscale their van fleets.

This has resulted in a 68% rise year-to-date in van sales to fleet, with much of the growth in the 3.5-tonne panel van sector.

However, with 62% of businesses experiencing long lead times on vans (slightly fewer than for cars), many have had to turn to short-term rental to plug the gaps. Consequently, the Barometer survey finds that just 23% of companies have increased their van fleet size in recent months, with 71% seeing no change.

Looking ahead, slightly more (28%) believe their van fleet size will grow while almost 68% expect no change.

Risk management and safety is of principal importance for professional fleet decision-makers. Regular licence checks should be the cornerstone of any risk policy and every survey respondent purports to undertake them.

Traditionally, fleets have carried out one licence check a year, rising in frequency for drivers with points. However, the *Fleet News* Barometer survey found that 60% of respondents check licences at least once every six months. A further 37% do an annual check.

Just 3% are falling short of reasonable expectations under their Duty of Care obligations: 2% check only when the employee is given a new company car (potentially once every three or four years dependent on replacement cycles) and 1% check every two years.

Recent data from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), obtained via a freedom of information request by IAM Roadsmart, revealed that 92,000 drivers are within three points of losing their licence while almost 9,000 people are continuing to drive despite having 12 or more points. Meanwhile, almost three million drivers have some points on their licence.

With other surveys showing that up to a quarter of staff would not inform their employer if they received points, regular licence checks are essential to ensure ⊃

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Martin Phillips,
Chief Operations Officer, Athlon UK

Over the past 18 months so much has changed. From the humble handshake at a sales meeting to the actual meeting itself, we are all doing things differently.

As the global response to the pandemic gathers pace we are starting to see fleet decision-makers growing in confidence about their activities, but also questioning how their fleets are being utilised.

What is the best way of leasing and is traditional leasing still the right choice?

It is encouraging that around a third of those surveyed are expecting their car and van fleet size to increase over the next three months. However, supply issues across the board will create greater focus on utilisation and downtime management – fleet managers need to ensure every vehicle is working as hard as it can.

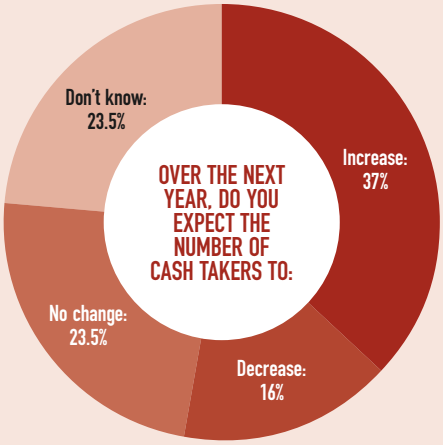
Athlon sees this as a role for the leasing companies.

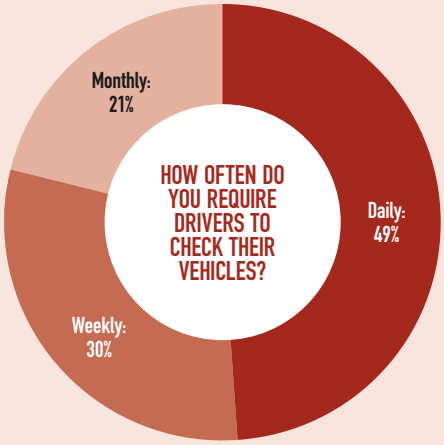
The survey shows continued interest in cash allowance and mobility schemes, and, while the results show outright purchase as a popular funding method, this is likely skewed by the respondents' smaller fleet size weighting. Either way, its clear that there is an ongoing need for the leasing sector to support fleets of all sizes to better understand their options.

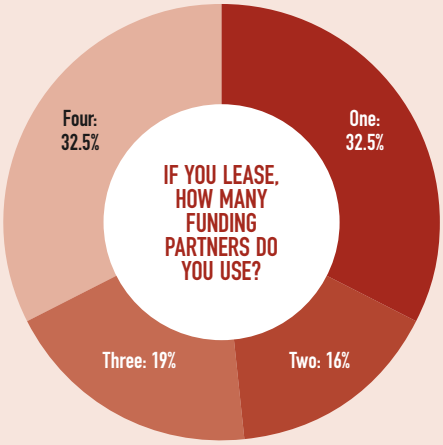
At Athlon, we see our role as more than just a funding partner, taking a consultative approach aligned to a customer's objectives and mission statement – not just their balance sheet.

Beyond the financial, the right leasing partner should also be ensuring that correct emphasis is applied to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability – areas that customers and employees are giving equal consideration to.

ATHLON







drivers are legal and to identify and address any risk concerns, such as speeding.

Almost half of fleets (49%) require their drivers to carry out daily maintenance checks on their vehicles, such as lights, oil and tyres, with 30% mandating weekly and 21% monthly. Van fleets, unsurprisingly, lean towards the more vigorous checking policy, while car fleets tend to be less strict on frequency.

Van fleets are also most likely to employ a Permit to Drive scheme. These are typically based on licence checks and driver training, plus a mandate to read the company car or van policy.

In total, 36% of respondents have a permit scheme, 33% do not and 31% are unsure (primarily companies with fewer than 100 vehicles).

EuroNCAP, the vehicle safety rating programme, is used by 26% of fleets when selecting the cars for their choice lists.

More than half of these fleets (52%) require the maximum of five stars, while 43% mandate at least four stars and 5% two. The vast majority, however, do not use the European safety initiative.

EuroNCAP has recently been rolled out to vans, with the first batch of testing highlighting the absence of key safety technology such as autonomous emergency braking, now commonplace on cars but fitted to fewer than one-in-five vans.

New General Safety Regulation (GSR) legislation will require all new vans to be fitted with certain types of advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) technology by 2024.

Chris Connors, head of facilities and fleet at Countryside Properties, believes fleet managers need to embrace the opportunity to work with their drivers to positively influence their behaviour and reduce road risk.

"Every accident that is avoided is an opportunity for a fleet manager to keep people safe," he says.

Almost a quarter of fleet respondents (24%) use more than one funding method for cars, while 14% use multiple methods for vans.

Outright purchase is used by 46% of fleets for some or all of their cars, while 40% use finance lease, 28% operating lease, 8% salary sacrifice and 6% employee car ownership scheme.

SURVEY FACTS: Business demands

27% under control

16% struggling to keep up

SURVEY FACTS: Fleet size profile

27.5% have increased fleet size

19.5% have decreased fleet size

MAIN FUNDING METHODS

Asked for their main funding method and outright purchase narrowly heads the list, with 31.5% of companies saying it accounts for the bulk of their cars. Finance lease is the second most popular method, according to 30%, followed by operating lease (24.5%). Salary sacrifice and employee car ownership are both used as the primary funding method by 2.5% of fleets.

The remainder use rental, payment in kind or could not determine a main method as the choice is dependent on vehicle type.

The make up of the survey respondents will have skewed the results away from contract hire, traditionally used by mid-to-large fleets, towards outright purchase and finance lease.

More than 60% of respondents (62%) operate fewer than 100 cars, while 53% have fewer than 100 vans. Just 9% have more than 1,000 cars and 5% more than 1,000 vans.

Consequently, outright purchase and finance lease also dominate the van funding decisions.

The survey showed that 64% use outright purchase, 35% finance lease and 22% operating lease, while 3% use flexi-rental.

Outright purchase is also the most popular main funding method, used by 47% for the majority of their vans. Finance lease is the preferred option for 28.5%, while 21.5% lean towards operating lease and 3% flexi-rental.

For those who lease their vehicles, more than two-thirds (67.5%) opt for more than one funding partner, confident that this competitive tender approach to quotations will minimise expenditure.

Almost a third (32.5%) have one partner, believing this offers them the closest partnership and the best value for money, while an identical 32.5% use more than three partners. Sitting in between are 16% who use two and 19% who use three.

Steve Winter, British Gas fleet manager, is an advocate of the sole supply partnership, which frees up his team's time to manage and plan.

He explains: "My suppliers 'do' and the team manages. We are streamlined because of our collaboration. It's an outsourced model that ensures we get maximum value for money."

Willmott Dixon chief financial officer Graham Dundas puts the opposing view: "Having a panel of funders gives us great benefits on competitive pricing and it has delivered significant cost savings over the years, around £150,000 per annum on the current fleet," he says.

There is no right answer when it comes to sole supply versus multi-funder; the decision will come down to individual business priorities and preferences, management time and resource.

ATHLON

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getting you there

Company Car IN ACTION

THE REBIRTH OF THE COMPANY CAR

2021 REVIEW

Almost 800 fleet decision-makers and influencers attended Company Car In Action in June to test drive the biggest-ever collection of electric cars at the event.

After the postponement of CCIA 2020, the industry came together for a two-day showcase of the latest EVs, with more than 200 models available to test on four tracks at Millbrook Proving Ground. We spoke to the 13 manufacturers to ask them about their expectations for the year ahead.

BMW

Providing BMW company car drivers with a customer experience more like that of a retail customer is a priority for the manufacturer over the next 12 months.

Rob East, general manager, corporate sales at BMW Group, says: "One thing I'm really passionate about is trying to create a relationship directly with a company car driver.

"As an industry, that's always been quite challenging. You've always had strong relationships with the fleet managers, strong relationships with the leasing companies, but it was quite difficult to build the bridge with the actual user-chooser."

To tackle this, BMW has introduced two initiatives.

East says: "When a company car driver orders a car, we maintain contact with them and send them targeted emails such as saying when their car is being built, when it's in the paint shop, when it's arrived in the UK.

"We try to create that excitement for the driver, because one thing we are really mindful about is that people select BMW with the same expectations as a retail customer, but as we don't have that direct relationship, it's quite difficult for us to deliver that."

East says BMW has also launched a new online platform called Inside Edge where drivers gain access to rewards, as well as business insights.

There is also a one-off reward from Costa, free movie rental and 20% off Harmon Kardon audio products.

He added: "It's a way in which we can engage with customers and give them a really broad and varied brand experience."

East says another focus of BMW in the fleet sector is electrification. By 2023, the manufacturer will have 25 electrified products, 13 of which are set to be pure electric.

He adds: "One trend we're seeing clearly is that customers only want to talk to us about one topic: electrification.

"With people working from home more, mileage is dropping and there seems to be a greater appetite for people moving from a traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) into pure electric."

VIDEO INTERVIEW: FLEETNEWS.CO.UK/ROB-EAST

FCA

A growth in grey fleet through affinity schemes or cash allowances is beneficial for Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA), says its fleet and business sales director Iain Montgomery.

"We're a challenger brand in the fleet arena," Montgomery says. "With grey fleet growing like it is, if people want to stay in a traditional company car scheme then that's fine, but it gives people more exposure to the brands that they probably wouldn't have in a mainstream fleet."

He adds that a trend towards lower business mileage through remote working has seen an increasing number of drivers wanting to try electric vehicles and he believes the Fiat 500e, with its range of up to 200 miles, is well placed to suit their needs.

"People want electrification – it's become more desirable and acceptable. Are you going to do 200 miles in a day? Most of the population would say no. The average commute is 14 miles, so we have a product that suits our time," he says.

A new Fiat Ducato Electric van is proving popular too, particularly for 'last-mile delivery' companies, Montgomery adds.

FORD

Demand for light commercial vehicles (LCVs) remains "unprecedented" across all key channels, including fleet, retail and rental as the desire for home deliveries shows no sign of slowing.

Ford fleet director Neil Wilson also pointed to a recovering car market, with Ford registrations up year-on-year, although around 15% down compared with 2019. Nevertheless, in the most recent two months, sales were "very close".

"We had lots of customers that didn't change their cars last year and extended leases, but business is now coming back," Wilson says.

Electric is driving the market with Mach-E already over-achieving its annual sales target. The changes to the £2,500 plug-in car grant, which is no longer available on cars priced above £35,000, such as the Mach-E, has made no difference to the order book, Wilson says.

"A lot of the demand is coming from corporate fleet as well as salary sacrifice. We are also seeing people moving from grey fleet back into the company fleet."

He is now looking to Ford's first electric van, the e-Transit, which will begin customer trials in the next couple of months ahead of a full launch in 2022. Those trials will give Ford valuable insight into range and usage profiles which it will use for customer training.

Ford has started to roll out its web-based Ford Telematics Essentials fleet management tool, with more than 100 already signed up.

This complimentary vehicle health check, which links to the Ford Liive uptime tool, has been trialled by a number of key customers who report significant savings.

"Oil life remaining is a key issue for fleets because the usage profiles vary so much. You also have drivers who turn off the (warning) light!" Wilson says. "One customer avoided three engine failures."

SEMINAR SPECIAL

GREY FLEET MANAGEMENT

Introduce an annual declaration for drivers to sign

To help manage driver safety and welfare within grey fleet, Alison Moriarty, fleet risk director at Driive, says companies can ensure drivers sign a standard annual declaration, including statements on eyesight checks, drugs and alcohol.

Moriarty says: "Having those statements and getting people to sign to say they'll do it (or have done it) provides cover for you and makes the driver think about it as well.

"If you've got an app that drivers use for walk-around checks, include your cars in that and add a declaration that asserts, 'I'm fit to drive this vehicle this day'."

Talking at CCIA, she also recommended that businesses perform quarterly licence checks for cars, as well as commercial vehicles, to help prevent driver insurance being invalid.

She says: "People can lose licences in a day and you will have drivers who don't know they've lost licences and they've been driving; therefore, all the insurance is invalid.

"It's really important that you do as many licence checks as possible, and quarterly is moving towards what the industry standard will be going forward."

Moriarty says some companies require drivers to pay insurance 12 months in advance as opposed to monthly payments to prevent cancelled policies due to missed payments.

Chris Connors (below), head of facilities and fleet at Countryside Properties, says his company needed a policy that covered grey fleet and outlined what is required and expected of employees.

He says: "Without that framework, and something to manage to, it's very difficult to communicate, but also to hold people to account."

He added that a policy can clearly state a company's requirements and is there for everyone to refer to.

He also highlighted the importance of keeping a record of grey fleet vehicles and understanding vehicle legal requirements to ensure employees follow guidelines to keep vehicles roadworthy.

JLR

Jaguar Land Rover is making a significant shift to electrified vehicles and now offers a substantial line-up of plug-in hybrid models alongside the electric I-Pace, many of which were available to test at CCIA.

Earlier this year, the carmaker announced a bold target to sell only fully electric Jaguars by 2025 and to launch six electric Land Rovers by 2030.

Until then, the new range of plug-in hybrid models are key to attracting a new customer base of user-choosers to the marques. Cars like the Land Rover Discovery Sport, Range Rover Evoque and Velar, plus the Jaguar E-Pace and F-Pace are all now offered with low-emission and low benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax powertrains.

In addition, the brand's commercial vehicle range is boosting its fleet sales thanks to the addition of the new Land Rover Defender Hardtop, joining the existing Discovery Commercial.

Andrew Jago, general manager, fleet & business at Jaguar Land Rover UK, says: "Awareness of our extensive range of Jaguar and Land Rover plug-in models and Land Rover commercial vehicles is building rapidly, which is increasing our share of fleet with existing customers and generating new business.

"Developing representation and expertise within our Fleet and Business Centre network remains central to our strategy. Our organisation has evolved to increase focus on TCO (total cost of ownership) and engagement with lease companies to deliver greater consistency and added value for our customers."

MG

MG has enjoyed rapid sales growth, despite a challenging market, and is quickly becoming a leading brand in the electric vehicle (EV) space.

Sales were up by more than 75% in the first half of the year with EVs accounting for almost a third of the brand's registrations during that period.

Its dealer network has also grown, with more than 30 sites added this year.

MG's plug-in models were of particular interest to CCIA visitors this year, with the ZS EV, MG 5 EV and new HS plug-in hybrid available to test.

"All these models are an ideal solution for the discerning company car driver who is looking to combine their green credentials with significantly reducing their BIK taxation," says MG national fleet sales manager Geraint Issac.

Following the event, MG announced a new longer-range battery for the MG 5, which is currently the only electric estate car on sale.

The 61.1kWh unit boosts range from 214 miles to more than 250 miles.

VIDEO INTERVIEW:
FLEETNEWS.CO.UK/MG-CCIA

SEMINAR SPECIAL

SALARY SACRIFICE

Overlooking 'less obvious' outgoings could cost you more

In a salary sacrifice arrangement, employers are liable for a whole set of costs and the employee gives up some of their salary to offset those. Simon Down, associate director at Deloitte UK, highlighted the importance of factoring in wholelife costs (WLCs) or total cost of ownership (TCO) into calculations – when it comes to salary sacrifice.

As well as factoring the more "obvious" costs, such as a vehicle funding, maintenance and motor insurance, Down stresses the importance of factoring in the "less obvious" costs such as business mileage reimbursement, national insurance contributions (NICs), VAT and corporation tax, cost of funds and future rule changes – which, he says, often get overlooked.

He added: "Unless you pick up all of those costs, when you say, 'my £6,000 cost for that car, I want £6,000 for the employee', you may not be comparing like-with-like. Or, if you don't get the numbers right, you could end up over-funding the employee and the business could end up paying for the scheme. That is something that's quite important to do, and the good thing is most leasing companies have the technology to do it.

"The two big things that make a difference are the business mileage reimbursement and the class one NICs, those can make a really big impact on savings, probably a couple of thousand pounds a year, dependent on the car."

Siemens is in the process of selecting a provider for its electric vehicle-only salary sacrifice scheme that will be available to all employees.

Amanda Bullough, EMEA benefits lead at Siemens, said: "The requirement we have is for our partners to support the employee experience of interacting with the benefit. Support has to be virtual and online – we're looking at providers that are able to support us with virtual roadshows, guides and online materials."

PORSCHE

Porsche is one of the fastest evolving manufacturers to take part in this year's CCIA.

Its entire line-up at the event was electric or plug-in hybrid, a big change from just a few years ago when it predominantly showcased petrol-powered models.

The sports car brand has made traction in the fleet and business sales space in the past few years, following the Panamera e-hybrid launch.

Today, around 70% of Panameras sold in Europe are plug-in hybrid and the brand is already making waves in the electric vehicle space with its new Taycan model.

Because the 2020 event was not able to be held, it was the first time those attending had seen the Taycan in Porsche's line-up.

As demand for the manufacturer's electrified models increases, Matt O'Brien, Porsche pre-owned and corporate sales manager, hinted that Porsche may revise its corporate sales strategy in the next 12 months.

He says: "All corporate sales are handled through our network of Porsche Centres, ensuring that corporate and fleet customers receive the same experience as our retail customers.

"However, we're in the fortunate position of having a strong order bank which is putting pressure on certain model lines in particular, so we'll monitor how that goes and will look at any changes of approach that are needed in due course.

"If and when that happens, the customer will be the primary focus of any changes."

NISSAN

There is a clear role for manufacturers to play when it comes to offering consultation services to fleets on electric vehicles, according to Nissan fleet director Peter McDonald.

"We have a role to play as an enabler, but it goes deeper than just the manufacturer; there's also the relationship with the dealer and the leasing company," he says.

"We are focused on making the driver trials and experiences positive ones so the fleets will adopt EVs more quickly. But, we have to work in conjunction with other influencers to speed the transition and aid innovation."

The opportunities on cars are fairly straightforward, with businesses of all sizes able to bring electric onto their fleets with minimal hurdles.

However, vans are more complex with fewer models, lower supply, no BIK incentives and no used market, resulting in more guesswork on residual planning.

"There are also the charging issues and the reimbursement, while range is more complex," says McDonald. "The early adopters are the larger businesses and Government – we sell the majority of our vans to them."

Adding additional challenges to the electric van quandary is the semiconductor shortage, which is affecting all vehicle types.

Nissan is working with suppliers to get components to its Sunderland plant, but McDonald says the longest lead times are on vans.

"It's a big problem, but it's also a global issue," he adds.

The shortage has resulted in a strong used market, with some leasing companies exceeding Cap values by up to 30%. McDonald expects this to continue for the rest of the year, mirrored by a strong market recovery for new – supplies willing.

POLESTAR

Winner of Best Zero Emission Car at this year's Fleet News Awards, the Polestar 2 impressed judges with its 335-mile range, driveability and affordable pricing.

Polestar's approach is to treat retail and fleet customers in exactly the same way, providing a 'VIP experience'.

Matt Hawkins, Polestar UK head of sales, says: "We take a pragmatic approach to the way that we work with customers, and we don't differentiate between fleet and retail when it comes to the customer experience – whether they're fleet or retail, we want them to have a great brand experience with Polestar."

Debbie Hunt, who leads Polestar's UK fleet sales, adds: "It's the right car at the right time and we know we've got a fantastic product. People beam when they get out of the car and it stacks up with the benefit-in-kind taxation."

Drivers can test drive the car at a growing number of Polestar regional hubs or pop-up events held around the country. The buying process can also be completed online.

RENAULT

Businesses need to start planning at least a year in advance of bringing electric vehicles (EVs) onto their fleet, according to the boss of Mobilize Power Solutions (MPS), Renault's EV charging and infrastructure offshoot.

Mark Dickens, formerly Renault fleet director, says the key considerations concern workplace charging and home charging infrastructure.

"All too often we see knee-jerk reactions to the adoption of charging, but it needs to be properly planned," he says.

"We've seen horror stories, such as fleets who ordered electric vans and installed a charging infrastructure, but the chargers don't work. The manufacturer gets the blame, but in all the cases that we've got involved in, it's the charger that isn't right for the van – it's the wrong kW or amperage because a van has different requirements to a car."

On average, obtaining a quote from a distribution network operator (DNO) for a power supply upgrade can take six-to-nine months, and bidding wars can erupt when multiple companies want an upgrade.

The best-case scenario is four-to-five months, but one case MPS is working on has a date of 2023 to complete the work.

Although owned by Renault, MPS takes a "brand agnostic" view on both manufacturer and charger type, according to Dickens.

"We have the expertise of the manufacturer that can be applied to fleets with our recommendation on what you should do from vehicle to infrastructure to the in-life use of cars, vans, trucks and buses," he says.

"We see a lot of bad advice around such as if you have x number of vans, you need x chargers. This isn't the case; it's down to usage and how often vehicles stand still."

EXTENDED INTERVIEW:
FLEETNEWS.CO.UK/PLAN-ELECTRIC

SUZUKI

Suzuki has refocused its corporate sales strategy with a renewed emphasis on core end user fleets under the leadership of Lee Giddings, its recently appointed national fleet sales manager.

The brand has introduced two new cars in new segments, the Swace estate and Across SUV. These new models complement its existing passenger car range, which now offers electrified powertrains across the board.

The Across is Suzuki's first plug-in hybrid model and provides the brand with an opportunity to increase its share in the user-chooser market.

Giddings says: "The past 12 months have been like no other I have experienced in the industry and it has provided us with the opportunity to sit back and plan strategically for the future. This began with ensuring we had the right people in the right places, which we have now achieved and we are now looking forward to improving the way we work with our customers.

"A particular focus is to work more closely with core end user fleets, public sector organisations through the Crown Commercial Framework and continue our excellent relationships with the leasing industry."

Suzuki has also increased its focus on residual value management within the organisation and is reviewing its strategy accordingly.

TESLA

The Tesla Model 3 was available to drive at CCIA for the first time this year. Its attendance at the event coincided with the electric model topping sales charts in the month of June.

Almost 5,500 examples of the Model 3 were delivered, accounting for around 30% of the electric cars sold that month.

Designed and built as the world's first mass-market electric vehicle, Tesla says the Model 3 provides the longest range of any comparable electric saloon.

The American carmaker expanded its UK dealer network to 25 sites during 2020 and plans further network growth this year.

It has boosted its aftersales operation significantly and now has 15 service locations across the country, with more than 300 service team members.

This has led to a 130% increase in available service appointments and a 60% reduction in waiting times for appointments.

TOYOTA

While battery electric dominates the headlines, interest in hydrogen fuel cell is gathering pace, and not just for heavy duty vehicles.

Jon Hunt, Toyota GB manager alternative fuels, says the new Mirai, which went on sale in June, has secured a strong order book, helped in part by the 25% reduction in price over the outgoing model. P11D pricing now starts at just less than £50,000, compared with almost £66,000.

The new car features a battery stack that is self-contained in a block configuration which means it is positioned in the bonnet rather than under the front seats. This also makes it more transferable for trucks, while multiple stacks open up possibilities in rail.

"The intention with our Fuel Cell business unit is to develop the fuel stack and software modules with manufacturers to apply them to their own applications," says Hunt. "In a heavy duty 44-tonne truck, for example, the new configuration means they could have two stacks in an L shape: one in the bonnet and one under the front seats."

Durability remains the biggest challenge when it comes to high mileage trucks, and Hunt points to a sizeable gap before the electric powertrain reaches the level of commercial opportunity to be as usable as cars.

He adds: "It is working in the States and Japan where we see 18-tonne trucks and light duty vehicles. However, all these vehicles need to have a second owner to protect residual values.

"Refuelling stations are still a challenge in the UK. The solution has to come at an energy level not a transport level. There needs to be investment in the grid system to move energy around quickly, easily and more cheaply; the transport of hydrogen is cheaper and more flexible than anything else and it can be used in the existing networks or transported by road or ship."

VOLVO

Volvo is providing a free wallbox charger to company car drivers who order a new plug-in (PHEV) or electric vehicle (EV).

Volvo's head of fleet and remarketing Robert Morris says the move would play a part in helping to alleviate drivers' range anxiety.

He says: "We asked ourselves, 'what's the barrier to company car drivers getting into a plug-in hybrid or an electric vehicle'? Quite often, it was not being able to charge at home.

"We're now supplying the wallbox charger free to customers for both PHEVs and EVs. Range anxiety almost disappears if drivers have a charger at home."

The manufacturer will become an EV-only car brand by 2030.

Morris has also noticed a growing desire for the manufacture's plug-in hybrid and electric vehicles through employer salary sacrifice schemes.

"It is the right product at the right time for consumers who may have moved away from a company car three or four years ago and are now coming back into the fold through salary sacrifice," he says.

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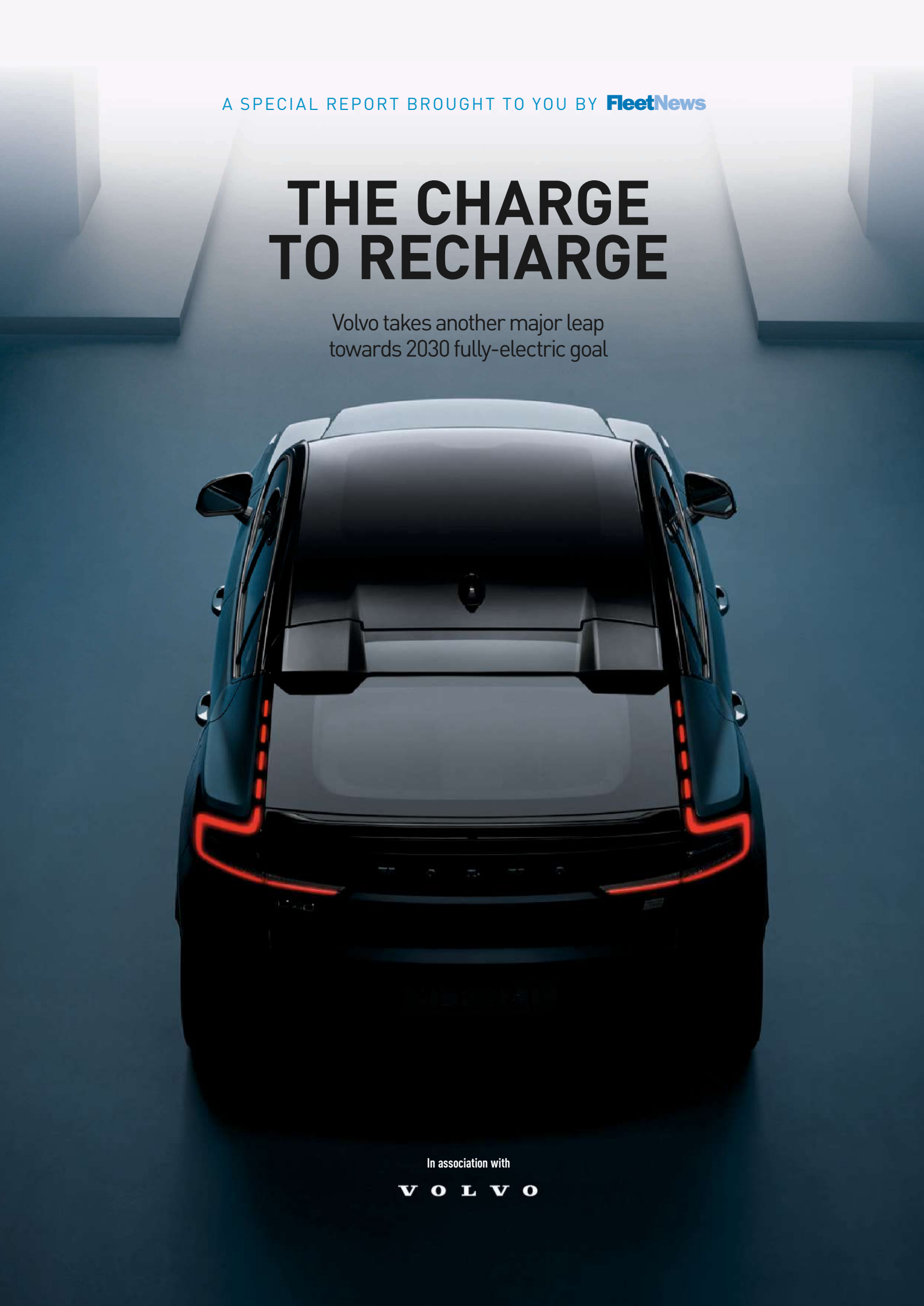
THE CHARGE TO RECHARGE

Volvo takes another major leap towards 2030 fully-electric goal



In association with

VOLVO

Sustainability and desirability

Why Volvo's core values chime with fleets

Even the most cursory glance back over the past 60 years will find Volvo Cars ahead of the curve time and time again. From the invention of the life-saving three-point seatbelt and its focus on driver and passenger safety, to the ergonomics of its interior designs, the sustainability of its cars and manufacturing processes, and even the way it supports its fleet customers, Volvo has quietly led the automotive market.

Volvo published its first Environmental Report almost 30 years ago, in 1992, and expanded this to a full annual Sustainability Report in 2003.

The subtle, Swedish brand prefers to advance the values that have been its pillars for decades rather than compare itself with competitors.

For example, it is the first manufacturer to introduce plug-in models across its entire range and the first pure battery electric vehicle (BEV) to reach its showrooms, the XC40 Recharge, will be swiftly followed by a steady stream of exciting electric models.

These ultra-low and zero emission cars chime with the key priorities of an increasing number of fleet customers, says Rob Morris, head of fleet and remarketing, Volvo Car UK.

"It's a combination of desirability and sustainability," he says. "Our fleet and business customers have a need and desire for a premium product so they can offer their employees a wide choice of vehicles throughout their company car grades as a powerful retention tool, while meeting their own CSR (corporate social responsibility) objectives."

Underlining this direction of travel towards cleaner vehicles, more than half the fleet decision-makers who attended this year's Company Car in

> OUR FLEET AND BUSINESS CUSTOMERS HAVE A NEED AND DESIRE FOR A PREMIUM PRODUCT SO THEY CAN OFFER THEIR EMPLOYEES A WIDE CHOICE OF VEHICLES THROUGHOUT THEIR COMPANY CAR GRADES AS A POWERFUL RETENTION TOOL
>
> **ROB MORRIS, HEAD OF FLEET AND REMARKETING**

VOLVO FLEET & BUSINESS TEAM

NATIONAL FLEET SALES
Led by: Jack Munford
Role: To support large corporate clients and the leasing industry

NATIONAL BUSINESS SALES TEAM
Led by: Sarah Symcox
Role: To support smaller fleets with fewer than 50 cars

SPECIAL VEHICLES & PUBLIC SECTOR
Led by: Jeanette Griggs
Role: To support emergency service and public sector fleets

REMARKETING & FLEET OPERATIONS
Led by: Graeme Oswald
Role: To manage Volvo's internal fleet, demonstrators and rental cars, and oversee their remarketing

Call the Volvo Car Business Centre on 0345 600 4027 or visit volvocars.co.uk/business

Action test-drove a Volvo, and three-quarters of these were in the XC40 Recharge battery electric model.

Their enthusiasm is matched by the fast-growing cohort of company car drivers who want to do the right thing for the environment, want to seize the opportunity to minimise their benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bills, and want to be behind the wheel of modern, aspirational cars.

PHEVs have accounted for 60% of Volvo's true fleet sales this year, and there's a bulging fleet order book for the all-electric XC40 and C40 Recharge models, as companies understand and appreciate the wholelife cost savings of battery-powered cars.

"We have just developed a total cost of ownership (TCO) comparison tool on our website, continuing on from the BIK tax calculator we developed last year," says Morris.

"The initial upfront cost of a PHEV or BEV may be more expensive because of their advances in technology, but there are significant TCO savings in national insurance contributions (NICs), service, maintenance and repair (SMR) bills, and fuel costs, especially if drivers can charge their cars at home."

As fleets and drivers face the challenge and uncertainty of switching to plug-in vehicles, Volvo is concentrating on making the transition as smooth and easy as possible for companies and their employees. Any driver who orders one of the manufacturer's PHEV or BEV models qualifies for a complimentary wallbox home charger, worth £899, installed by NewMotion. Plus, the new Volvo Cars app massively simplifies life with an electric vehicle (EV), monitoring the state of charge in a car's batteries, calculating the percentage of charge left at the end of a journey and locating all of the charge points along a route to help drivers overcome any lingering range anxiety. Drivers can also take advantage of discounted charging fees at the ultra-fast Ionity network of chargers, thanks to Volvo's new partnership with Plugsurfing.

It's a further example of how a premium brand extends beyond the car to the entire ownership experience and it's an approach that is working. Volvo sales were 56% up in the first half of this year, comfortably outperforming the market, with fleet accounting for half of the new registrations.

"My vision is that we become the number one premium choice manufacturer with fleets," says Morris. "It's not all about volume; it's about service and the relationships we have with our clients."

TRUE SUSTAINABILITY

Volvo has committed to shrink dramatically its entire carbon footprint, starting immediately, and to become carbon-neutral by 2040.

In a series of bold targets, the maker has pledged to reduce the lifecycle carbon footprint per new car by 40% between 2018 and 2025, and for half of its sales to be fully electric by the middle of the decade.

But Volvo's environmental goals extend well beyond tailpipe emissions to encompass its manufacturing network, wider operations, supply chain and even the recycling and reuse of materials.

The independent Science-Based Targets initiative has recognised Volvo's emissions reduction targets to be in line with the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to well below 2°C compared with pre-industrial levels.

Green-focused fleets can find more detail on Volvo's sustainability initiatives in the manufacturer's decision to disclose the average lifecycle carbon footprint of each new model, starting with the XC40 Recharge. This first report reveals that the fully-electric XC40 could have a carbon footprint less than half the size of its ICE (internal combustion engine) equivalent, if it is recharged with renewable energy, despite the 70% higher carbon emissions in its manufacturing process, prompted by its batteries.

Serving smaller fleets

Volvo's National Business Sales Team is focused on making company cars a bonus not a burden to SMEs

If the shape of the UK fleet sector is a pyramid, then for every thousand-plus vehicle operation at the top, there are tens of thousands of smaller fleets at the base. And, while the largest fleets have dedicated managers, for the majority of smaller businesses, the engine room of the UK economy, company cars can be a complicated and time-consuming affair.

They're essential for the mobility, recruitment and retention of staff, but the complexities of deciding the optimum means of finance, understanding the tax implications, and keeping them serviced and maintained can be a drain on resources.

This is where the Volvo Car Business Centre comes into play, supporting both customers who run fewer than 50 cars and the Volvo retailers who serve them.

The centre acts as a hub, providing expertise and administrative support, which includes arranging test drives in the manufacturer's dedicated 200-strong demonstrator fleet. A key area of its operation is the hugely successful Virtual Sales Manager function, virtual not in an artificial intelligence (AI) sense, but because it communicates via video conference and phone.

"We recognised that there was a need to have a bespoke service for smaller customers," says Sarah Symcox, national business sales lead. "We offer a dedicated point of contact for small businesses and support them with their unique business needs. Our Virtual Sales Manager programme means we can provide a service which is absolutely consultative. It's an opportunity for customers to have somebody who can talk to them about, not only a diverse range of cars, but also a diverse range of procurement options. Sometimes our team can be doing multiple different quotations for one vehicle; being able to offer that level of service is key."

The service is not only efficient, but also environmentally friendly – reducing the miles traditionally driven by field sales staff and helping Volvo to achieve its carbon reduction targets. And it's flexible, too, as it's happy to work with customers' existing leasing companies or provide quotations through Volvo Cars Financial Services.

The transition to plug-in vehicles, both fully electric and hybrid, generates an abundance of questions for the team to be called upon to answer, with Volvo keen to walk in the shoes of its customers, understanding a day in the life of a driver with an electric company car, and honestly sharing its experience and advice about operating battery-powered models.

"It's about having empathy with our customers and their drivers, because, as staff of Volvo, we're all going through that same transition to electric and we're using that to think about how we further support our customers with initiatives and offers that make owning a Volvo as easy as possible," says Symcox.

PREMIUM RESIDUALS

With strong residual values (RVs) one of the defining characteristics of a premium brand, Volvo is paying meticulous attention to detail in the disposal of its cars to ensure its used values are in line with, or exceed, those of premium rivals.

A dedicated Remarketing and Fleet Operations department oversees the in-life management of the company's own and affiliate fleet, as well as the sale of ex-rental and lease cars from Volvo Cars Financial Services.

"We have such a strong impact on our RVs by selling those cars only into our retailer network," says Graeme Oswald, who leads the department.

"And we do it in as sustainable way as possible – all sales are digital and online, there's no transporting cars to auction."

Sales prices are provided weekly and transparently to all of the leading used car data guides and forecasters, giving leasing companies essential information for forecasting future RVs.

The department will sell about 7,000 cars this year, all into its network, ensuring that residual values are optimised.

IT'S ABOUT HAVING EMPATHY WITH OUR CUSTOMERS AND THEIR DRIVERS BECAUSE, AS STAFF OF VOLVO, WE'RE ALL GOING THOUGH THAT SAME TRANSITION TO ELECTRIC

SARAH SYMCOX, NATIONAL BUSINESS SALES LEAD

Silent progress

Volvo's plug-in hybrid and pure electric models offer practical zero-emission range – all in a luxury package

VOLVO XC40 RECHARGE PURE ELECTRIC

Range: **Up to 259 miles**
Battery: **78kWh**
Power: **408HP**
Benefit-in-kind tax: **1% (2021/22)**
Price: **From £49,950**

The XC40 Recharge Pure Electric makes the step to battery power seamless. Impressive range is allied to the easiest driver interface, thanks to Google built-in; Google Maps for navigation and Google Assistance for hands-free voice control. The system is so smart it can recommend when and where to charge on a journey to eliminate range anxiety. An extra bonus is that there's currently good availability of this multi-award winning, top-selling car in the premium compact SUV segment.

VOLVO C40 RECHARGE PURE ELECTRIC*

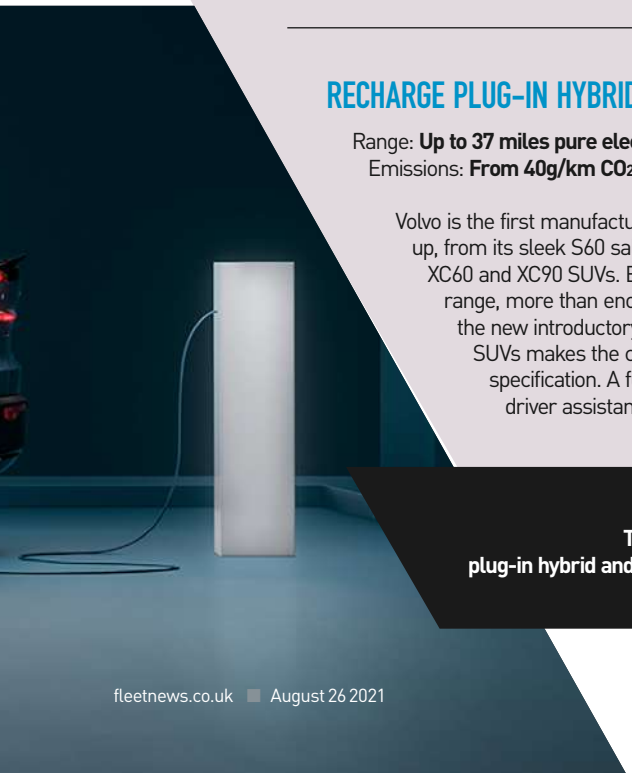
Range: **Up to 260 miles**
Battery: **78kWh**
Power: **408HP**
Benefit-in-kind tax: **1% (2021/22)**
Price: **£57,400**

Interest is surging in this stylish crossover that shares the star features of the XC40 in a striking design, with a coupe-like roofline and raked rear end. The C40 is the first Volvo to be designed from the drawing board as a pure electric model and it's brimming with cutting edge technology, including Google, as well as Volvo's famed advanced driver assistance safety systems. The zero emission car is available to order now.
**Preliminary data*

RECHARGE PLUG-IN HYBRID RANGE

Range: **Up to 37 miles pure electric**
Emissions: **From 40g/km CO_2**
Benefit-in-kind tax: **From 11% (2021/22)**
Price: **From £37,290**

Volvo is the first manufacturer to have a plug-in model across its entire product line-up, from its sleek S60 saloon to its versatile V90 estate, via the hugely popular XC40, XC60 and XC90 SUVs. Each of the cars offers at least 28 miles of battery-powered range, more than enough for a zero emission commute to and from work. Also, the new introductory Inscription Expression trim in the PHEV variants on the SUVs makes the cars even more accessible, without any compromise on specification. A full suite of infotainment features and Volvo's advanced driver assistance safety technology are all standard.



FREE HOME CHARGE POINT

To make the transition to battery power as easy as possible, Volvo is offering all customers of its plug-in hybrid and pure electric models a complimentary home wallbox to charge their cars. Volvo has partnered with NewMotion to deliver the service, which is worth £899.

HYUNDAI IONIQ 5

Ioniq 5 makes a statement about Hyundai's premium market ambitions

By Matt de Prez

The Ioniq 5 isn't just 'another electric car' from Hyundai. It's a statement of intent. Having successfully transitioned from being a budget-friendly brand to a mainstream one, the Korean carmaker now wants a slice of the premium market.

That's why the Ioniq 5 is more than simply a badge-engineering exercise – it uses an entirely new platform, powertrain and design language and will spearhead a whole new range of cars under the Ioniq umbrella.

Hyundai has already enjoyed success in the fleet market with its Kona Electric, which was one of the first long-range EVs to market with an affordable price tag. The Ioniq 5 is different, however. It won't be offered with petrol or diesel engines. It's been designed from day one to be an electric vehicle (EV) and that makes a big difference.

While its hatchback silhouette might trick you into thinking this is a Volkswagen Golf rival, it's not until you see the car in the flesh that you realise its footprint is larger than that of a Tucson SUV and, thanks to that EV-specific chassis, interior space is on par with a luxury saloon.

The concept car looks should be enough to lure in EV sceptics, with its balance of retro and modern styling cues, and, once you go beyond the surface, it's clear the Ioniq 5 is a practical company car.

Inside, you'll find big squishy seats, a vast flat floor and a beautifully simplistic dashboard. Thankfully, Hyundai has elected to retain controls for key elements, rather than bundle everything into a touchscreen. So, for example, there's a volume knob for the radio and a touch-sensitive panel to control the air con.

At this point, it would be understandable to think that the Ioniq 5 is probably quite expensive. But, it's not. Prices start at £36,940 – about the same as a decent-spec BMW 3 Series. There are three powertrain options to choose from, starting with the rear-wheel drive 58kWh model. You can boost range with the 73kWh variant, costing from £41,890. There's also a twin-motor all-wheel drive model, coming in at £45,090.

The Ioniq 5 benefits from having a simple dashboard

Up to 240 miles of driving range is offered by the entry-level car, while the bigger battery gives 300. So far, we've only tried the twin-motor, which promises 287 miles, officially. In our experience, it's going be tough to get beyond 250 miles. Our test model was showing consumption of 3.3mi/kWh, which is quite a lot less than we've managed in a Kona EV. We look forward to testing the single motor variants to see if they are more efficient.

Of course, being a premium-focused model, the Ionic 5 is a lot heavier than a Kona. It tips the scales at almost two tonnes, dependent on spec. The upshot is a much smoother and refined experience than you'll get from its sibling. The Ioniq 5 does feel like an executive saloon to drive.

The ride on our test model's 20-inch wheels was a tad firm, although the super soft seats help to isolate passengers from that to a degree. Dynamically, the Ioniq 5 isn't quite as engaging as its hot-hatch styling might suggest, but that doesn't mean it isn't well calibrated. There's minimal body roll and the weight is largely confined to the chassis, meaning the centre of gravity is low.

With 305PS, the twin-motor version feels adequately potent. It manages the 0-62mph benchmark in 5.2 seconds and delivers a healthy surge of acceleration when required. A three-stage regeneration system can be controlled using steering wheel-mounted paddles and drivers can switch between Eco, Comfort and Sport driving modes – plus there's a one pedal driving feature, called i-Pedal.

When it's time to recharge, the Ioniq 5 has an

	ENTRY LEVEL Hyundai Ioniq 5 58kWh SE Connect	RANGE TOPPER Hyundai Ioniq 5 AWD 78kWh Ultimate	FLEET PICK Hyundai Ioniq 5 78kWh Premium
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£36,940	£48,090	£41,890
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0g/km	0g/km	0g/km
Range	240	300	287
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£6	1%/£8	1%/£7
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0
Class 1A NIC	£51	£66	£58
Fuel cost (ppm)	3.8	4.4	3.8
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	36ppm	47ppm	40.6ppm
AFR (ppm)	4	4	4
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£13,678/37%	£17,028/35%	£15,078/36%

Go to www.fleetnews.co.uk for tax figures from April 2020-2022

RIVALS

AUDI Q4
e-tron 40 Sport

POLESTAR 2
Single Motor Long Range

VW ID4
Pro Performance Life

	AUDI Q4 e-tron 40 Sport	POLESTAR 2 Single Motor Long Range	VW ID4 Pro Performance Life
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£44,935	£42,845	£41,965
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0g/km	0g/km	0g/km
Range	316	335	323
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£7.50	1%/£7	1%/£7
Annual VED	£0	£0	£0
Class 1A NIC	£62	£59	£58
Fuel cost (ppm)	4.1	4.5	4
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	44ppm	43.8ppm	41ppm
AFR (ppm)	4	4	4
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£16,136/36%	£15,850/37%	£15,000/36%

The Ioniq 5's EV-specific chassis allows it to have interior space matching that of a luxury saloon

advantage over its mainstream competitors. It's equipped with 800v architecture – that's the sort of thing you get on a Porsche Taycan – and it means the car can utilise 350kW rapid chargers. If you can find a rapid charger, then it's possible to add 80% charge in just 18 minutes.

Day-to-day convenience is boosted further by a sizeable boot, wide-opening rear doors and a handy blind-spot camera system that shows a live video image from the car's rear quarter, in the instrument cluster, when you indicate.

From a fleet perspective, the Ioniq 5 is exactly what the market needs right now. There's a big gap between budget-friendly EVs and luxurious ones, leaving little choice for user-choosers looking for an electric alternative to the ubiquitous German saloons.

While its range might be slightly less than we'd hoped, the ability to charge so quickly, paired with the Ioniq 5's desirable looks, good performance and comfortable ride, make it an ideal contender in the premium market.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward

Dependent on who you speak to or what you read, there is considerable and confusing noise coming out of Europe on the future of petrol and diesel engines. I have friends and colleagues who live in various countries on the Continent and, I think, one thing is for certain, the UK will be on its own in banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030.

The soonest I can see any other country banning new internal combustion engine (ICE) cars will be 2035, with some country leaders saying it may be 2050. That would be 20 years after us, if, indeed, it happens at all. I have my doubts.

I can't imagine going on a new car press launch, or a fleet launch in Europe, and being offered the chance to drive petrol and diesels only, or cars powered by a new type of fuel (more below) that will be offered elsewhere, but not here in the UK.

Electric cars are brilliant and great to drive, but the cost of them is prohibitive and the infrastructure is nowhere near good enough at present. The same can be said in most other EU countries.

Face-to-face meetings

Over the past few weeks, it has been fantastic to get out and talk face-to-face with manufacturers at some of their driving events, including Suzuki, Kia, Honda and Mazda. It was also great to go to CCIA, Fleet News Awards and Yorkshire Motorsport Festival where Bentley, Alpine, Toyota, Land Rover and McLaren all had displays.

One topic that regularly crops up is the potential for a new type of fuel, maybe synthetic, that is an eco-friendly replica of petrol or diesel, but cuts down hugely on CO_2 emissions. It's not a new technology and dates back more than a hundred years.

There are many methods used to make synthetic fuels. Many manufacturers are part of the 'e-fuel alliance' working on the technology along with universities, scientists and chemists. My concern is that the UK might just be jumping the gun a bit by banning petrol and diesel, when a good alternative might be on the horizon and it will not be allowed to be sold here.

Fleet News Awards

Looking back at the Fleet News Awards, I, along with the other 899 guests, thoroughly enjoyed the day and the format. Such a pleasant change to have an afternoon in Ascot as opposed to an evening in London.

The problem now for the FN events team is – does it go back to the traditional, more formal Grosvenor House set-up or try the racecourse again?

What a dilemma. But, it's a nice problem to have, as both are great venues.

AUDI Q4 E-TRON

Familiarity breeds content with the latest SUV out of the VW Group stable

By Andrew Ryan

Audi's Q4 e-tron is the third compact SUV to be based on the Volkswagen Group's new MEB battery electric vehicle platform and, just like the Volkswagen ID4 and Škoda Enyaq iV before it, it's a cracker.

The platform gives it the same strengths as its VW Group siblings, such as high levels of practicality, range, efficiency and low benefit-in-kind tax, but wrapped in Audi's premium package.

This all but guarantees it will be a huge success in the fleet sector, which Audi expects will account for 50% of Q4 e-tron sales.

It also expects the SUV to become its second biggest seller behind the A3, taking 14.4% of all its UK sales in 2022.

From the outside, the Q4 e-tron is unmistakably an Audi. It has the familiar prominent grille, with styling cues such as the head- and tail-lights similar to those across the carmaker's range.

The familiarity extends to the interior as well. As expected, the cabin features the usual high-quality materials and build quality associated with the brand, as well as sharing the overall design cues.

	FLEET PICK Q4 E-TRON 40 S LINE
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£47,035
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£8
Class 1A NIC	£65
Annual VED	£0 then £0
RV (4yr/80k)	£16,548/35%
Fuel cost (ppm)	4.21
AER (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	46.23ppm
CO_2 (g/km)	0
Range	308 miles

Unusually, the steering wheel is flat at both top and bottom

All Q4 e-trons also come with the Audi Virtual Cockpit instrument panel, while the manufacturer's MMI infotainment system is operated through a centrally-mounted 10.1-inch touchscreen.

The biggest surprise is the steering wheel, which is a departure from the norm as it has a flat top and bottom, similar to many Peugeot models.

This doesn't stop it from being nice to hold, however, and it is also the first Audi steering wheel to offer touch-sensitive controls for features such as cruise control and the infotainment system. These recognise not only touch, but swipe gestures to navigate through lists.

The MEB platform, which sees the vehicle battery mounted low in the chassis, means there is plenty of room in the cabin for passengers, while the boot is a generous 520 litres with the rear seats in place, rising to 1,490 litres with them folded.

This usability is enhanced by the range of powertrains offered: drivers can choose from two battery sizes.

The Q4 e-tron 35 models have a 52kWh battery and a 170PS motor for a WLTP driving range of up to 208 miles. The Q4 e-tron 40 and 50 models feature a 77kWh battery which, dependent on trim, offers a range of up to 316 miles.

The 40 models are, like the 35 variants, rear-wheel drive but are fitted with a 208PS motor, while the 50s are four-wheel drive with 300PS.

The Q4 e-trons with the 52kWh battery are able to charge at up to 100kW from a rapid charger, while the 77kWh batteries can cope with speeds of up to 125kW.

This means a Q4 e-tron 40 with the larger battery can take 80 miles of range in approximately 10 minutes.

Four trim levels are available – Sport, S line, Edition 1 and Vorsprung – with P11D prices ranging from £42,195 to £66,515.

Audi expects S line to be the most popular choice, and its standard equipment includes LED head- and tail-lights, sports seats, MMI Navigation Plus infotainment system, cruise control, rear parking sensors, sports suspension and 20-inch alloy wheels.

The car's plentiful on-paper appeal is supported ably by the driving experience. The Q4 e-tron's electric powertrain gives it plenty of instant acceleration, while the ride is both as comfortable and refined as you'd expect from a premium SUV.

For many company car drivers, the above will put it at the top of their choice list – and justifiably so.

VOLKSWAGEN ARTEON EHYBRID

Plug-in hybrid option has reduced operating costs

By Matt de Prez

The Volkswagen Arteon has always seemed like a bit of a missed opportunity in the fleet sector. It launched with a diesel-focused engine line-up at a time when diesel was falling from grace and failed to compete with premium-badged rivals when it came to running costs and benefit-in-kind (BIK).

Now, finally, VW has added a plug-in hybrid option to the mix. It's essentially a Passat GTE under the skin, although the powertrain is known as the eHybrid and is available across the regular Arteon trim grades in both Fastback and Shooting Brake body styles.

Despite its aging engine, the 1.4-litre TSI and electric motor combo does a decent job of shifting the Arteon with a power output of 218PS. A 13kWh battery gives a 39-mile electric range, frustratingly one mile short of the 7% BIK banding.

The VW Arteon eHybrid has a distinctive look, But, under the skin, it is essentially a Passat GTE

With tax bills from £75 per month, the Arteon eHybrid is by far the cheapest in the range from a company car tax perspective.

It's frugal enough too. We were averaging around 60mpg in hybrid mode, which is slightly more than the diesel model can manage.

Regular charging will see that figure rise higher.

Prices start at £41,160, which is a tad more than the sector benchmark BMW 330e. The front-wheel-drive Arteon lacks the BMW's poise, but is more spacious and practical.

With a distinctive look and comfort-focused drive, the Arteon eHybrid continues to offer fleet customers an alternative to the norm, but now with reduced operating costs.

PEUGEOT 508 SPORT ENGINEERED

Hardcore makeover includes improved cornering

The PSE has rapid acceleration, but the ride is very firm

By Matt de Prez

It's not uncommon to see plug-in hybrids with hefty power outputs and sporty body kits, but Peugeot has gone a little bit further than that with the new 508 Peugeot Sport Engineered (PSE).

Built to showcase its new electrified performance division, the humble 508 has been given a hardcore makeover. It's got a wider track, new suspension, bigger brakes and body styling to improve its aerodynamics.

All of these enhancements are there to handle the increased power from the 508 PSE's plug-in hybrid powertrain. It uses two electric motors and a 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol engine to deliver 360PS to all four wheels – a boost of 135PS compared with the previous most powerful model.

An 11.5kWh battery gives a zero-emission range of 26 miles, while CO_2 emissions are restrained to 46g/km – putting the PSE in the 11% BIK band.

The acceleration is rapid, but it's the 508's renewed ability to go around corners that really impresses. It's hunkered down, grippy and encourages a more aggressive driving style.

Unfortunately, on a Tuesday afternoon on the M1, these attributes mean the 508 PSE is less enjoyable. The ride is very firm, even when the adaptive dampers are in their comfort setting, and fuel economy hovers around the mid-30s on longer trips.

Prices start at £53,995 and there's only really one rival, the Volvo S60 Polestar Engineered, which offers a similar package, albeit less full-on.

Some elements of the 508 PSE are magnificent, and it will certainly put a smile on your face, but it also serves to highlight the compromises of plug-in hybrids.

In short, it would be better overall if it was either fully-electric or petrol-powered.

HYUNDAI TUCSON FIRST TEST

PHEV ULTIMATE

By Stephen Briers

Hyundai has been producing decent looking cars for several years now and the latest Tucson mid-size SUV improves upon its predecessor's design by introducing striking angular lines and serrations, contemporary black grille and swopping roofline to give a real presence on the road.

Some have suggested the look is a little jarring, but we like it, as do most of the people we've encountered so far. My only gripe is the wheel arches which are flat rather than curved.

We're testing the plug-in hybrid version in range-topping Ultimate trim which offers 35 miles of EV-only range from the 13.8kWh battery, mated to a 1.6-litre petrol engine and four-wheel drive with combined power output of 265PS.

CO_2 emissions are 31%, putting the car in the 11% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax bracket and costing a 20% taxpayer £77 a month. Not bad for a car with a price tag of almost £42,000.

The Tucson Ultimate is packed with safety equipment as standard.

Full driving views to come in future test reports but, so far, the experience is a positive one.

VOLVO XC40

T4 R DESIGN

By Mike Roberts

I recently attended three days' worth of gigs in Coventry held as part of its City of Culture 2021 status celebrations.

On arrival at a car park on the first evening I was delighted to see a row of chargers I could use to top up the Volvo battery. After unsuccessful attempts to find one that worked on the first two evenings, I had more success on the Sunday. I was a little surprised, however, to be charged £5.15 for 24 miles of charge. A colleague paid £10 for 120 miles of charge in a public car park, so it pays to do your homework.

Since being handed the keys to the Volvo, most of my driving has been in hybrid mode – put your destination in the sat-nav and it'll work out whether to use engine or battery power.

It's a relaxed and smooth drive, but you can enjoy more 'oomph' by opting for the power mode when battery and engine combine.

While this can be useful when you need a bit of poke under your pedal, the Volvo isn't the sort of car that you'll want to throw around corners on country lanes. Other driving modes are 'pure' which is fully electric and the self-explanatory 'off-road'.

FORD TRANSIT

CUSTOM TRAIL 300 L1H1 DOUBLE-CAB-IN-VAN 2.0 ECOBLUE

By Trevor Gehlcken

Regular readers will know by now that our long-termer Ford Transit Custom Trail scales the heights that few other vans do, what with its stunning exterior, six leather seats and enough technology on-board, seemingly, to fly a spaceship.

Suffice to say, I'm having a whale of a time swanking about, showing off to the neighbours. All very well for me and my ego. But, I would expect cost-conscious fleet managers to ask does this vehicle really have any place among the fleet contenders?

Well, my answer would be 'yes' ... and 'no'. If your firm is scraping to get by after the problems posed by pandemic lockdowns and makes a living out of lugging dirty old lumps of cargo about from place to place, the answer is 'no'.

But, if your company wants to portray a stylish and upmarket image, then this van will do just that when it turns up at a client's premises.

If, in addition, your firm needs to collect executives from the airport, say, and transport them and their luggage hither and thither, then I'm struggling to imagine a better vehicle to do it with.

And how's this for a suggestion?

If you have, let's say, a requirement for 50 vans on your fleet, consider buying 49 standard variants and one of these models. The driver to achieve the best fuel economy figure for the month (as revealed by your fleet software package) gets to use the Custom Trail for the following month.

It's a strategy I have advocated many times in the past and, believe me, it works – just watch those fuel costs plummet when the juicy carrot of driving the Transit Custom Trail is dangled in front of your drivers' eyes.

On the day-to-day running front, I had a pleasant surprise recently when I realised that my iPhone linked itself up to the van's electronics system automatically without me having to do anything, thus enabling hands-free calls.

It seems like magic to me, as an old groaner of 68, although younger readers will probably laugh at my naivety.

Clever or not, it's just another one of the many wow factors that this van possesses to keep me very happy.

MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

By Andrew Ryan

As a driver, I'm a big fan of our long-term Mazda MX-30. It shares the same MX branding as the manufacturer's popular MX-5 sports car, and, although the handling is not as sharp as that of the two-seater, it's still impressive.

There's a nice weight and directness to the steering, while the composed ride strikes a fine balance between sportiness and comfort.

As a front-seat passenger, I'd be equally as happy. There's plenty of room, the seat – just like the driver's identical one – is comfortable and supportive, while the quality of materials and build of the surrounding cabin is high.

It'd be a slightly different story if I was a rear-seat passenger, however. There's plenty of headroom thanks to the MX-30's SUV coupe styling, but legroom is much less generous.

The biggest issue, however, is caused by the rear doors. These are rear-hinged so open the opposite way to the front ones, and overlap so the front doors need to be opened before the rear ones can be.

They look great and if you park somewhere with loads of room around the car where you can open the front doors fully, then the biggest issue is how you have to sink into the seats as the backrests are beyond the rearmost part of the door.

However, in a busy car park where you cannot open the doors fully, getting in and out is much harder: after clambering out, rear seat passengers have to adopt some kind of dance to shift from behind the part-opened rear doors to behind the part-opened front ones, so they can close the back doors before being able to clear the vehicle.

This isn't a big issue for me as I rarely use a car's rear seats for passengers, but quite often put shopping or other bags on them, but have stopped doing this because of the added faff the rear doors and set-back seats have created.

This has meant I've used the boot much more than I usually would, which has not been a hardship as it's a decent size (341 litres) and has a practical square shape.

It's also meant I discovered a really handy feature which may otherwise have passed me by: there's a button on the inside of the bootlid which you can press to lock the doors, meaning you can just shut the boot and walk away.

It's a relatively minor feature, but just adds to the overall positive ownership experience.

ŠKODA OCTAVIA IV

FIRST TEST

SE L 1.4 TSI PLUG-IN HYBRID

By Luke Neal

Last month we said farewell to our long-term Škoda Octavia. This month we welcome... a Škoda Octavia! This version is the 204PS plug-in hybrid in saloon guise. It has a 1.4 petrol engine with a six-speed DSG gearbox and an 85kw electric motor offering a combined mpg of 188.3-282.5, CO_2 of 22-23g/km and an all-electric range of 44 miles.

Options fitted to this car include 19" alloys (£910), leather upholstery (£240), metallic paint (£595), rear parking camera (£605) and a £905 winter pack, bringing the total to £36,450.

The car is smooth and powerful and the DSG box is slick and effortless. Transition between electric and petrol is almost seamless perhaps due to the e-noise generator for the electric drive which emits an engine sound up to 30mph (which I have to admit I haven't noticed). The cabin is spacious and the leather seats seem a little firmer than the fabric version in our previous Octavia.

It is better looking than the estate model due to the swooping roofline and larger Bencrux anthracite multispoke wheels. Although we have noticed a little more road noise than previously.

VW GOLF

GTE 1.4 TSI PHEV

By Matt de Prez

We've had a go in the Golf GTI and GTD to see if our GTE is worthy of those 'GT' letters on its tailgate.

The GTE has the same 245PS peak power output as the GTI and shares a torque figure (400Nm) with the GTD. Weight prevents it being the quickest from 0-60, but it still achieves a respectable 6.7 seconds.

While the GTI needs to be worked hard to deliver the goods, the GTD needs nothing more than a brush of the accelerator to gather pace.

The GTE is potent enough when running on just electricity, but, once you bring the 1.4-litre petrol engine into the mix, it's a bit lacklustre unless you nail the throttle.

It's also the least nimble in the bends, but not by as much as you'd think. Our car's optional adaptive dampers help to firm up the ride when you need it and the standard-fit variable ratio steering ensures the car changes direction swiftly.

When it comes to running costs, the GTE shines. Drivers will save £2,000 per year in benefit-in-kind tax when compared with a GTI and £1,500 over a GTD. It also has the lowest running costs – 44p per mile (GTI 51ppm; GTD 45ppm).

SUZUKI SWACE

HYBRID SZ5

By Jeremy Bennett

The Swace is the product of a partnership between Suzuki and Toyota, based on the Corolla Touring Sports. It has its own front-end design and steering wheel, a more limited engine choice and trim levels, but – as outlined by Suzuki national fleet sales manager Lee Giddings at CCIA in June – a more comprehensive specification list.

But, how does the Swace compare more widely on the 'fleet fundamentals', such as tax and efficiency against this natural competitor and other brands' estates?

The Swace has a WLTP combined fuel consumption figure of 64.2mpg (I'm enjoying a high of 62.1mpg after four months' driving) and 103g/km CO_2 emissions.

With a 24% tax rate in the current year and a P11D price of £29,094, the benefit-in-kind (BIK) figure is £6,983, leading to tax payable at the 20% rate of £1,397 and, at 40%, £2,793.

In terms of employee's costs, the first-year road tax is £150, Class 1A national insurance contributions £964, running costs over four years/80,000 miles is 37.79p per mile (ppm) and the residual value is projected at £8,805.

A comparable 2021 model year Corolla Touring Sports (1.8 VVT-h 122 Trek) with a lower P11D list price of £29,005, but higher CO_2 emissions of 113g/km means a BIK liability of £7,541 and therefore higher tax bills of £1,508 and £3,017 respectively.

Year one road tax is £20 more, insurance £77 and running costs 1.4 ppm more. The total cost across the operating cycle comes out at £30,232 for the Swace versus £31,360 for the Toyota.

So, while the Swace has a slightly higher P11D price and offers little in the way of engine and trim choice, its low CO_2 emissions figure and high mpg rate make it a viable competitor to its Japanese relation.

But with only 2,000 sales expected in the UK in a full year, getting hold of one might prove to be a challenge.

AUDI A3

40 TFSI E (204PS)

By Sarah Tooze

Since I took delivery of the Audi A3 plug-in hybrid in March I've clocked up 1,682 miles, mainly on 12- and 19-mile round trips. That's well within the A3's claimed 40-mile electric range so I've set the A3 to drive on electric only.

It's also possible to set it to auto hybrid (for long-distance driving), battery hold (to maintain battery charge) or battery charge (the combustion engine is used to increase the battery charge).

There are other ways to boost the car's electric range, including putting it in 'efficiency' driving mode and turning the air-con off or setting it to 'eco'.

I tend to have the air conditioning on eco but prefer the 'comfort' driving mode over 'efficiency' to smooth out the bumps on the rural roads near my house. 'Dynamic' (i.e. 'sport'), 'auto' and 'individual' (i.e. adjusted to personal preferences) are options.

The available electric range has risen from 34 miles when we took delivery to 37 miles – three below the official figure for the S line trim with 17-inch wheels. Average short-term consumption is 192mpg or 4.3 miles per kWh, while long-term consumption is 71.7mpg or 7.2 miles per kWh.

SEAT LEON

1.4 E-HYBRID FR

By Gareth Roberts

The Seat Leon 1.4 e-Hybrid faces some stiff competition from its plug-in hybrid hatchback rivals.

Not only does it have its VW Group siblings to contend with – hybrid versions of the Škoda Octavia, Audi A3 and VW Golf – but the Mercedes-Benz A-Class and the new Renault Megane are also eager for a slice of the company car market.

On-the-road, the Leon hybrid in entry-level FR guise has impressed, while on paper, it also stacks up well against its rivals.

Like the Golf, Octavia, A3 and A-Class, the Leon attracts 7% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax for 2021/22, thanks to a zero-emission range of up to 40 miles.

The Renault Megane E-Tech plug-in hybrid, however, has a BIK rate of 11%, due to an electric-only range of up to 30 miles.

Based on a four-year, 80,000-mile operating cycle, fleets face running costs of 43.22p per mile (ppm) for the Leon, not including Class 1A NIC, VED or insurance.

That's marginally cheaper than the Octavia at 43.74ppm and the Golf at 44.57ppm, but slightly more than the 42.72ppm achieved by the A3.

TOP TIPS FROM **BUSINESSES IN THE KNOW**

For any fleet manager charged with the task of implementing a new product or service, the number of suppliers jostling for their attention can be quite overwhelming.

Clear and concise advice at their fingertips is what they need most when trying to plough their way through the wealth of information available.

Companies that offer such advice stand out from the crowd and cement their place as key industry voices – it's these businesses that quickly gain a reputation for being leading experts in their field.

How fleets want to receive such advice also differs; some fleet managers prefer it in print, others online or from an email newsletter, or via social media. *Fleet News* uses all of these mediums and more to convey information to those who need it most.

Sharing your expertise can really make a difference to fleet policy implementation and puts your business front and centre in the minds of decision-makers and influencers.

DRIVER TRAINING • COMPLIANCE • CASH VS CAR
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Driver safety training: You can benefit from e-learning and the power of different learning approaches

The pandemic has taught us to find smarter ways of working. Road deaths, collisions and serious injuries remain a concern – even with less traffic. These concerns can impact businesses in terms of both cost and reputation.

Despite changes in work behaviours, you can still easily assess your drivers for their exposure to risk and provide timely and relevant coaching.

Businesses with a real commitment to duty of care are using online learning and development applications to help continue to protect and improve their drivers' safety.

DriveTech has a range of online driver assessments (for all types of vehicles) that can be completed by your drivers effectively – wherever they are.

The assessments are supported by a comprehensive suite of 24 e-learning modules (and a further follow-on 72 'micro-teach' modules to act as sound-bite refreshers). They cover just about every aspect of business driving.

We have been developing novel 'nudge-theory' learning approaches – to give impactful sound-bite video coaching that encourages self-reflection and positive safety and eco changes in driver behaviour.

DriveTech's new series, Driver's Mate, is for the professional driver community and, as part of our EV training range, EV Co-Driver has 17 informative video modules on all aspects of adopting EV into fleet.

Behaviour change with added convenience. All online.

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Mind the gap – flexible long-term rental helps fleet managers keep business motoring

The challenge is on to make sure fleet is fit for purpose and ready to meet demand. But current vehicle supply issues – along with a commercial reticence to tie up cash in lengthy lease agreements – are stretching the minds of the best fleet managers.

With supply problems likely to impact businesses well into 2022, companies need to find other ways to ensure they have the vehicle fleet they need, when they need it.

Avoiding the use of grey fleet – employees' own vehicles – is also an imperative for many fleet managers.

Long-term rental offers a viable and agile solution that bridges the current gap in supply and keeps business moving.

Long-term rental from Europcar Mobility Group UK delivers an optimised vehicle fleet that can flex as requirements vary.

Ask these questions to see if long-term rental is the right fit:
- **I don't know how long the business will need a vehicle – how do I avoid upfront deposits or early termination fees?**
- **How can we access young, well maintained vehicles to create the best impression to our customers?**
- **Is there an alternative to the cost and administration of vehicle maintenance?**

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FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN YOUR BUSINESS

By Martin Evans, managing director, Jaama

Fleet operators need to have complete visibility of what is going on in their business in order to have full control. This is especially critical given the ever-increasing raft of legislation and best practice associated with vehicle and driver compliance.

Many fleets have multiple sites and different depots with potentially different levels of diligence and working practices. The risk of errors and compliance issues increases unless you have one system with a centralised view.

Employers face a raft of essential compliance governance requirements under legislation as well as obligations under road traffic law. What's more, government agencies including the DVSA, DVLA and HMRC are increasingly turning to digitalisation to ensure all vehicle and driver-related records are, essentially, self-policed without manual intervention.

Jaama managing director Martin Evans said: "There are no short cuts to legislative and best practice compliance. It is critical that fleet decision-makers have a holistic view of driver and vehicle compliance and have strategic reporting in order to make well-informed decisions.

"Not only is compliance critical from a legislative perspective, but it is also crucial in respect of corporate image, cost control and fleet efficiency.

Evans added: "Fleet managers can never have enough information at their fingertips. It is essential that systems are in place to collect, measure, manage and process all data into meaningful information that gives strategic intelligence, while simultaneously ensuring total legislative compliance."

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FIND THE BEST SOLUTION(S) TO MEET FLEET OBJECTIVES AND CATER FOR DIFFERENT EMPLOYEE POPULATIONS

By Christopher Caddick, Head of Business Development

Cash vs car? More like cash vs structured cash vs employee car ownership vs salary sacrifice car vs traditional company car. With a plethora of options available to UK businesses, finding the right car provision policy solution for both the business need and perk populations can be a difficult task. There's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach.

For different employee populations there are key variables affecting the cost of provision, including the employee's tax rate, business and private mileages, and whether the employee is ready to adopt an EV. With various solutions available, you could cater for all the different populations, but, crucially, you must understand how vehicle provision fits in with the wider business objectives.

First, you need to understand what the business wants to achieve with its car provision; is it used as a recruitment tool, for improved staff retention or greater cost control?

Considering how the fleet is affected by the business' appetite to risk, changes to support CSR strategy and/or the business' wider values/image, and the desire for increased simplicity and/or reduced administration, may help to narrow down your choices.

However, while you can achieve these through your car policy, it is difficult without employee buy-in.

Undertake a review of your fleet, keep an open mind to different solutions available and the potential of deploying multiple solutions across your policy aimed at different populations.

Finally, work with a partner independent of any one solution, to identify the best overall solution for your business and employees.

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HOW TO: DESIGN A FUTURE-READY FLEET POLICY

Whether you're just starting the journey or looking to evolve your sustainability agenda, a vital element of a successful transition strategy is a best practice, future-ready electric vehicle (EV) fleet policy. One that clearly defines how drivers will utilise their EVs and what their responsibilities are, offers vehicles that align to both your fleet and driver requirements and provides expert support on everything from charging to journey planning.

Here are our five key steps to success…

First, use wholelife cost to calculate the cost of running your current fleet – this is your baseline. If you operate commercial vehicles, factor in downtime and Clean Air Zone charges.

Step two is to profile and segment drivers based on location, daily mileage, vehicle size and specification, typical vehicle load and where the vehicle is stored when not in use.

Next, match your segments to suitable available electric or low-emitting vehicles that fall within your baseline cost to discover options that not only meet current and future business travel needs, but also suit employees' differing lifestyles.

Once your policy has been defined, communication and information are key. It's important to provide access to expert knowledge for items such as home charging, the tax and running cost benefits of choosing

an EV and how to plan journeys where charging is required.

Finally, analyse. In a market that continues to develop at pace, it's essential to plan and track against both your own fleet targets and the UK's wider sustainability goals.

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WHY NEXT-GENERATION VIDEO IS THE KEY TO UNLOCKING CONNECTIVITY

Today's connected fleets are no longer simply about tracking vehicles or monitoring fuel. They must now provide accurate insights into what's happening both in the cab and on the road. This is being achieved through next generation video telematics, driven by Machine Vision and Artificial Intelligence (MV+AI).

MV recognises objects and human behaviour inside the cab. It can identify distracted driving behaviours such as mobile phone use, eating and drinking, smoking, inattentiveness or failure to wear a seatbelt. AI technology then compares risky behaviour against a vast bank of accumulated driving data to determine the level of risk detected – and whether the incident needs to be flagged to the fleet manager via a short video clip.

Unlike traditional telematics solutions which rely on G-force triggers to deduce post-event what happened during an incident, MV+AI technology helps fleet managers to see when something is about to happen, not just when it has already happened. It can warn drivers when a risky behaviour takes place via an in-cab alert, allowing them to adjust their behaviour in-the-moment. Fleet managers can also evaluate these behaviours to help them assess and mitigate future risk.

Reduced risk and improved driver safety can also help to bring down insurance claims – with Lytx® innovations helping customers to shrink claims costs by up to 80%. This is most successful when companies integrate Lytx technology directly

with insurers – providing them with complete visibility and live, real-time footage. This connected approach means footage can be used to negate claims immediately without hassle or delay, if a driver is clearly not at fault.

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Hydrogen or electric? Two routes to zero carbon

How truck manufacturers are decarbonising transport

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Government looking to 'support rather than hinder' driver progress

'Urgent focus' on less complicated and increased HGV driver testing

By Gareth Roberts

Government proposals to overhaul the truck test regime to help solve the driver shortage have been cautiously welcomed by the commercial fleet industry.

Changes include allowing drivers to take one test to drive both a rigid and articulated lorry, rather than having to pass a test in a rigid lorry first, and then another in an articulated one.

Ministers also want to allow the off-road manoeuvres part of the test to be assessed by the driver training industry and let car drivers tow a trailer without having to take another test.

The shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers is reported to have increased over the past five years from 45,000 in 2016 to 76,000 today, according to the Department for Transport (DfT).

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) estimates the shortfall in drivers is closer to 100,000.

Launching a consultation on the proposed changes, the DfT acknowledged that the shortage is likely to become acute as the demand for haulage services increases with the country moving out of Covid-19 restrictions, including the full reopening of the hospitality sector and the seasonal increase in demand towards Christmas.

Roads minister Baroness Vere explained that the pandemic had made clear the "vital support" the commercial fleet industry provides, and the impact it has on the economy to ensure that the supply chain is maintained.

"The industry and their drivers have risen to that challenge that the pandemic has thrown at us and we know that this has been in the context of historic driver shortages," she said.

Driver testing restarted in mid-April with around 3,000 tests a day, significantly more than before the pandemic, said the DfT.

"The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is working hard to tackle the backlog by putting in place additional measures to increase the number of vocational tests available, including prioritising training of full-time DVSA examiners over delegated examiners and operational changes that will help reduce time taken to upgrade licence entitlement," Baroness Vere explained. "The proposals in this consultation are not only about the need to free-up more examiner capacity, but also how we can streamline the stages of tests needed and the content of trailer testing."

The DfT argues that this will benefit the speed at which drivers gain their licence entitlement, allow more focus on driving skills actually needed with more flexibility than at present and reduce unnecessary barriers in the progress of becoming qualified.

Baroness Vere says those that wish to make vocational driving their career need to feel confident that the processes involved in qualifying for a licence "support rather than hinder".

She added: "We understand the need to maintain the professional standards of our vocational drivers, ensuring the safety of all our road users, and the proposals set out how we feel we can best achieve this while looking towards a more innovative way in which we can test our drivers."

CHANGES WILL 'TAKE TIME'

The pandemic has resulted in the loss of about 12 months of driver training and testing, while online retail averaged 28.1% of retail sales in 2020, according to Logistics UK, up from 19.2% in 2019.

Elizabeth de Jong, policy director at Logistics UK, said: "We welcome proposals for reform of the vocational driving test process to increase test capacity, but it will take time to make the necessary changes to legislation, and for it to be implemented on the ground, before the full benefit can be felt."

Compared with 2019, there were 43% fewer tests conducted in 2020, with 35% of these conducted in the

first quarter (January to March), when less than 15,000 tests were carried out, prior to the advent of the pandemic.

And, during the first lockdown period of April through June, only 631 tests took place. By comparison, in 2019, 18,625 tests were conducted over a similar period.

"It is good to see the urgent focus placed by Government on increased HGV driver testing with DVSA, as this is currently the biggest blocker to new entrants entering the workforce," continued de Jong, "but without targets and a workable timeline, this is simply a statement of intent.

"We need to know how soon the backlog of 25,000 test passes can be cleared more swiftly by the DVSA, as we estimate at current rates this will take 27 weeks – until the end of January 2022."

The RHA welcomed the proposed changes and urged the industry to respond to the consultation, which closes on September 7.

The DfT has extended the temporary relaxation of drivers' hours enforcement until October, due to the continued pressures on local and national supply chains.

In July, the DfT announced that HGV drivers can increase their daily driving limits or change weekly rest patterns.

It said the move reflects the "exceptional circumstances" stemming from a shortage of HGV drivers causing "acute supply chain pressures".

The original extension expired on August 8 but has now been extended until October 3. Operators must notify the DfT if the relaxation is being used by completing a notification form.

Drivers must note on the back of their tachograph charts or printouts the reasons why they are exceeding the normally permitted limits.

This is usual practice in emergencies and is essential for enforcement purposes.

> "WE UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF OUR VOCATIONAL DRIVERS"
>
> **BARONESS VERE, DFT**

ISTOCK/KZENON

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's

Electric vans at ITT Hub

It was great to get out to the ITT Hub Show held at Farnborough. Not only was I able to catch up with industry friends not seen since the beginning of the pandemic, the show gave me an opportunity to get behind the wheel of so many electric vans. The Maxus e-Deliver 3, Maxus e-Deliver 9, the Mercedes-Benz eVito and eSprinter, the Renault Trucks Master ZE and the Fiat e-Ducato were put through their paces and all emerged with flying colours. When tailored to the right operation, each and every van has a place in the future of UK transport and logistics. All we need now is a robust infrastructure to support them.

Ford E-Transit's wholelife credentials

Essex's Dunton Technical Centre was the location for a wholelife cost presentation of the all-new Ford E Transit. With up to 25 variants, improved specification levels, new fully connected technologies, redesigned running gear, AC and DC charging capabilities, payloads in excess of 1,500kg and an eight-year battery warranty, Ford has really worked hard to make its battery electric Transit truly fit-for-purpose. Fleets will be amazed with the changes.

Ellesmere Port v Luton

Stellantis, the world's fifth-largest auto manufacturer has announced plans to build electric vans at its Ellesmere Port plant in Cheshire, safeguarding 1,000 jobs. This is great news, but does it put the long-term future of the Luton plant in doubt? Currently, the Vauxhall Vivaro-e is built in France alongside the Citroën e-Dispatch and Peugeot e-Expert vans with diesel versions of the Vivaro made at Luton. Although there is a growing call to switch Vivaro-e production to Luton, who would bet against all electric van production moving to Ellesmere Port?

New LCV registrations

On the face of it, June 2021 was another strong month with 34,363 new LCVs appearing on UK roads. Although 14.4% (4,322 units) up on a Covid-impacted June 2020, it was 5,566 units (13.9% down) on the same month in 2019, with many of H1 registrations coming from Q3 and Q4 2020 orders. With a strong order bank, but extended lead times due to semiconductor and raw material shortages, expectations are that 2021 forecasts will not be achieved.

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ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q As a local authority, who would be the 'responsible person' for the purpose of an operator's licence application?

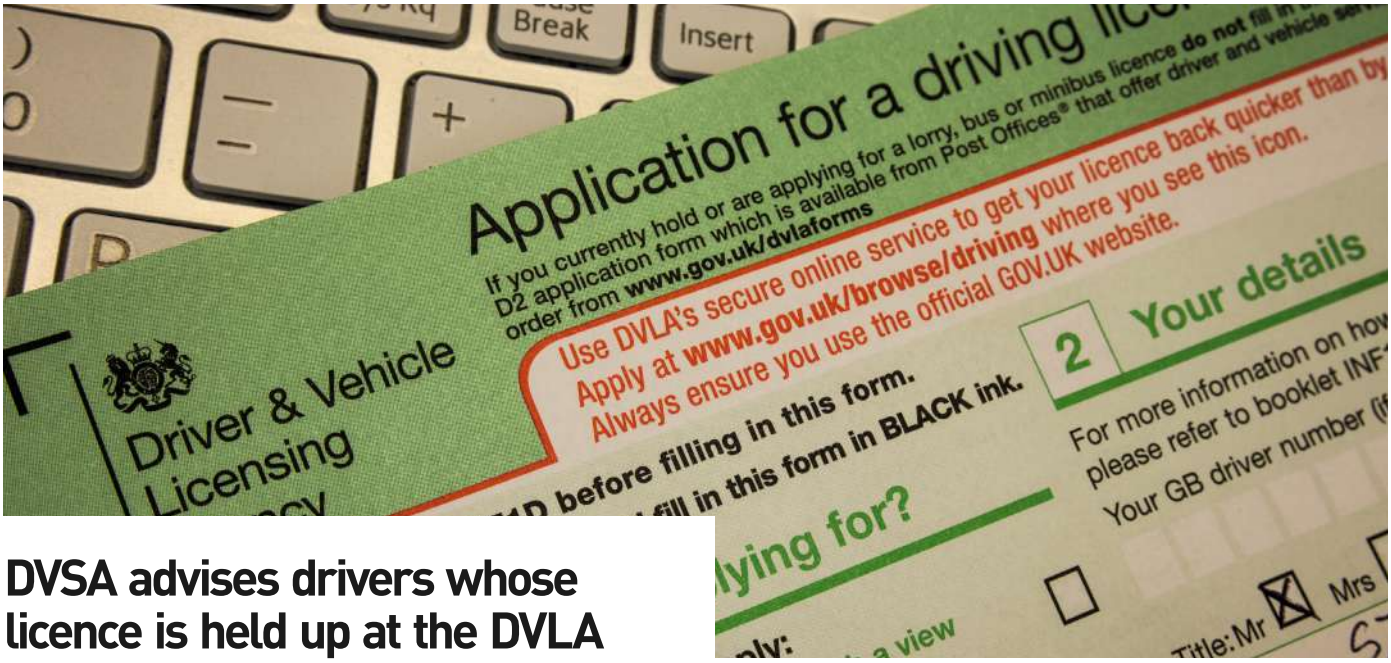
A In GV79G, 'Operator Licence Application Guidance Notes', guidance note 6(b) states: "This is the person or group of people with the controlling influence over the organisation, for example the board of directors, board of trustees, governing body or persons or the chief executive".

ISTOCK/FANGXIANUO

Q Are we allowed to carry any equipment such as sack trucks in the front of the van in the cab?

A Under The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, Regulation 100 states that "the load carried by a motor vehicle shall at all times be so secured, if necessary by physical restraint other than its own weight, and be in such a position, that neither danger nor nuisance is likely to be caused to any person or property by reason of the load or any part thereof falling or being blown from the vehicle or by reason of any movement of the load or any part thereof in relation to the vehicle." In order to transport any equipment in the front of the van, operators must ensure they comply with this.

ISTOCK/ URFINGUSS



ISTOCK/ ARTUR

DVSA advises drivers whose licence is held up at the DVLA

Due to a number of issues at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) offices – including the imposition of Covid-19 measures and staff taking strike action – it is currently operating at reduced staffing levels. This has seen an increase in waiting times for licence renewals to be processed.

As a result, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has issued the following advice to its examiners regarding the delay in processing driving licence renewals at the DVLA.

As part of the advice, DVSA recognises it needs to adopt a pragmatic approach to roadside enforcement. Its advice is that examiners should accept the following information from a driver where they have applied to renew their vocational licence and have not yet received it:

Situation 1: Driver has already sent the application to DVLA and has no evidence of it being sent or received.

Such circumstances require a declaration from the driver's employer/operator stating:

- They have submitted their application, but have no proof of sending it, or a text message from the DVLA to say it has been received.
- Confirm they meet all the Section 88 criteria apart from evidence that the licence has been received by the DVLA.

Situation 2: Driver is about to send their licence off and can provide proof of this, for example:

- A photograph of a completed application which should be dated. or
- Evidence of posting, to the DVLA, from the Post Office.

DVSA says that, in these circumstances, the examiner should not take any enforcement action until such time as the delays in processing paper applications have been reduced/resolved.

Examiners may require a copy of medical evidence that has been submitted to DVLA where they have an immediate concern about a driver's ability to drive.

As of July 26, paper applications – including where further information has been required from the applicant after an online application – are likely to take six-to-10 weeks to process.

There may be additional delays in processing more complex transactions, for example, if medical investigations are needed as part of the driving licence application.

Alternatively, those renewing their photocard driving licences can do this quickly and easily at participating Post Office branches if they are eligible, and by using this service, they can expect their driving licence to be issued within five days.

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TRIUMPH IN THE FACE OF DIVERSITY

The pandemic provided new opportunities for women to shine in transport and logistics. But, even so, females still only comprise a fifth of the sector's workforce. *Jess McGuire* reports

There's no denying the pivotal role transport and logistics has played over the past 18 months keeping supermarkets and essential suppliers stocked amid the coronavirus pandemic. But a period of seismic change hasn't stopped two inspiring individuals from moving their businesses forward.

The 2021 Amazon Everywoman in Transport and Logistics Awards, supported by *Fleet News* as the official media partner, celebrated 16 outstanding individuals working in the transport and logistics sector and the vital contribution women make.

The awards, now in their 14th year, showcased progression, accomplishments and increasing avenues of opportunity within an industry that is typically considered 'male-dominated'.

According to the Everywoman organisation, the pressure the industry faced has seen the number of female delivery drivers increase by 104%. However, women still only account for 20% of the 1.7 million people working in transport and logistics.

Alongside, meet two of this year's winners, who have gone 'above and beyond' the call of duty in their professional lives, challenging stereotypes and championing female leadership in transport and logistics.

2021 AMAZON EVERYWOMAN IN TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AWARDS WINNERS

Woman of the Year
Jaya Sajnani, director and transport manager at YG Travel
The Supply Chain Award
Above and Beyond – Kathy Cooke, head of operations at Wincanton
Leader – Alison Wynne Davis, general manager at Gist
The Freight Award
Above and Beyond – Danielle Owen, head of marketing and communications at EV Cargo
Leader – Sheeren Husein, head of Linehaul at DPD Group UK
The Customer/Passenger Award *(sponsored by Mercedes-Benz Vans UK)*
Above and Beyond – Paula Jones, city centre supervisor at Brighton & Hove and Metrobus
Leader – Dr Claire Williams, technical director – human factors and behaviour change, Atkins
The Infrastructure Award *(sponsored by Mott MacDonald)*
Above and Beyond – Charlotte Robinson, planner at Dyer & Butler
Leader – Lesley Waud, design development director, transportation UK and Europe at Atkins
The Warehousing Award *(sponsored by FedEx)*
Above and Beyond – Laura Morrison, general manager at Wincanton
Leader – Chloe Ball, warehouse manager at AF Blakemore
The Industry Champion Award *(sponsored by Asda)*
Caroline Welch, apprenticeship manager at Go-Ahead London
Male Agent of Change
Dominic Mottram, project manager and co-chair at Inspire Network Rail
The Apprentice of the Year Award *(sponsored by Unipart Rail)*
Sian Coley, degree apprentice at CEVA Logistics
International Inspiration Award:
Smita Sawdadkar, head of global design training service (EDPM) at Atkins

Jaya Sajnani: Woman of the Year

'I see the problem, I want to solve it'

The highly coveted Woman of the Year Award was presented to Jaya Sajnani, director and transport manager at YG Travel – an individual who has broken down barriers in both her professional and personal life.

YG Travel provides transport solutions for weddings, corporate events, schools and educational tours, and started with one minibus in 2018. But, under her leadership, the company now employs 15 drivers.

Sajnani left her small town in India to study finance in the UK, before setting up her own business. After getting married and starting a family, the business was created.

"I used to feel that cage on me – that I want to do something, but I can't because of my responsibility and my time limit," said Sajnani.

"I had to drop my daughter at school and pick her up and then I realised that if this is the time, I have to make it, I can't sit back. I need to fight

Kathy Cooke: The Supply Chain Award – Above and Beyond

'I love a problem, that's what gets me out of bed in the morning'

Kathy Cooke, head of operations for Wincanton's Sainsbury's contract and winner of the 'Above and Beyond' Supply Chain Award, was faced with issues including lack of female leadership, low morale and 'old fashioned ways of working',

back, do my old responsibility – but I can do better than this."

After further research, Sajnani realised that many parents struggled with balancing dropping the kids off at school and maintaining careers. "There were many school bus services available in the market, but they were not door-to-door and, if they were, they were not that safe," she says.

"What if this happened to my child, or the school does not affiliate with a school bus service.

"There were so many issues. I wanted to solve this problem and that's where my personality is.

"I see the problem; I want to solve it and that becomes a business and that's where I started the first school minibus service door-to-door pick-up."

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Sajnani was singled out by the awards judges for her dedication to supporting other women via a non-profit organisation – 'Women Entrepreneurs' – made up of female leaders from different backgrounds and professions.

The network has monthly meetings where members share the challenges they face and receive advice on how to overcome these obstacles. Sajnani says: "We invite every single female who feels that they are stuck in their job and want to get out.

"I share my life to the other leaders, and they share theirs to me – and that inspires them; it makes them feel that they are not the odd one out."

Sajnani supports members of the network and helps signpost them in the right direction, she says, stressing: "It's not just giving the help but continuing and making sure the person reaches the end goal".

VITAL JOURNEYS IN A CRISIS

When the pandemic struck, Sajnani's biggest challenge was having no jobs for her drivers. However, she managed to use her resources to provide vital journeys for care home staff, the local council and for people who were isolating or shielding, to ensure they had access to medicines and groceries.

Sajnani says: "I contacted essential businesses who could not afford to close down and said they could make use of my service for their staff.

"I asked them to pay for the fuel and the driver cost, and not worry about the usual cost of my executive coach – I know they can't afford it and I'm not doing this for the business, I'm doing this to survive and also help the community.

"That way, I managed to overcome the downturn in business. My drivers are still with me, I was able to pay the lease of the vehicles and the lease for my office – I was able to survive."

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

YG Travel provides educational tours for international young adults aged from 15-18, from countries including Malaysia, USA and China.

Sajnani said her mission for the business five years down the line is to create an affiliated university educational project for 15-to-18-year-olds from India for a 15-day educational tour in the UK. She is currently in talks with Oxford and Cambridge universities and the University of Greenwich to develop the course.

"I propose that we create a project with educational tours for the 15 days and the university can affiliate that tour as a part of the curriculum. It will be theoretical, not practical but it's exposure to a completely different atmosphere.

"The challenge for the kids will be the two weeks they are away from their family and associated home comforts."

when she started her role. Cooke rolled out leadership workshops and offered online learning courses to managers to help with their future development.

She says that, through the training, "we started empowering managers and giving them ability and confidence. Previously there wasn't any because they've never been allowed to make decisions. It resembled a business of the 70s or 80s and now it doesn't".

She also turned things around through improved standards; from work attire to engagement, communications, and recruited and promoted five female leaders.

She says: "I was the only female manager on a site of 60-70 managers. But we soon fixed that. We had several vacancies and, while it's not about just forcing women through, it's about getting the right person for the job. But I just don't think females in management positions had been considered previously."

Cooke has made savings of £1 million in her first year for Sainsbury's and £2.2m in almost two years, by launching a continuous improvement (CI) programme. The programme promoted buy-in from all – offering Six Sigma qualifications to colleagues and drivers.

"The uptake was really impressive, suggestions such as increasing speed limiters from 50mph to 56mph to reduce driver times and improving fuel efficiencies, including powering fridge trailers by electric rather than diesel.

"We also offered new generational contracts to drivers to help improve their work life balance by giving them more time with their families."

COLLEAGUE SAFETY WAS 'PARAMOUNT'

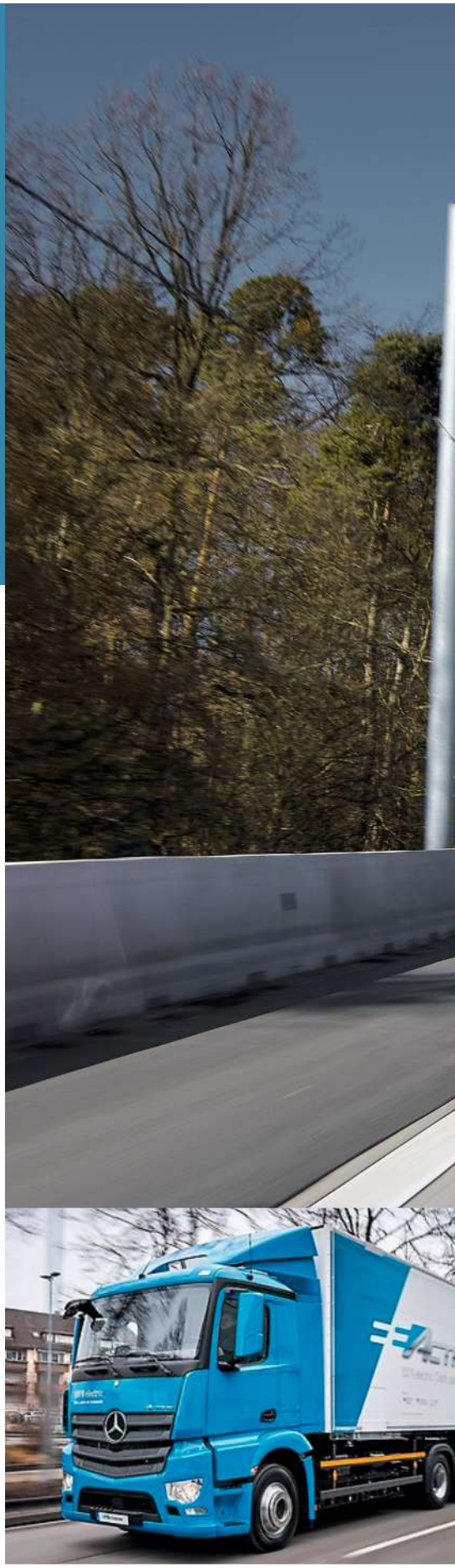
The safety of Cooke's colleagues was paramount amid the Covid crisis and she worked closely with a local authority and environmental health officer to identify any health and safety practices she could improve, including ensuring drivers were getting enough rest.

Cooke says her priorities for the next 12 months are to continue to work collaboratively within the transport industry, share resources and best practices, support the driver training initiatives launched by Wincanton and offer a better work-life balance to existing and future drivers.

> "I WAS THE ONLY FEMALE MANAGER ON THE SITE OF 60-70 MANAGERS. BUT WE SOON FIXED THAT"

HYDROGEN OR ELECTRIC? TWO ROUTES TO ZERO CARBON

The Government's decarbonising transport plan aims to help achieve zero truck emissions by 2050, but changing technologies and policies will determine how all in the sector achieve this. *Tim Campbell* reports



The need to reduce truck emissions has long been a focus in the industry, with governments and manufacturers putting significant work and investment toward achieving the ambition.

This was brought into even sharper focus in the UK last month with the publication of the Government's Decarbonising Transport plan (DTP).

For the first time, it announced its intention to ban the sale of new non-zero-emission HGVs under 26 tonnes in 2035, and larger trucks from 2040.

The proposed deadline still has to go out for consultation, but it follows similar action for smaller vehicles, which will see the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans banned from 2030, with only zero-emission models being available from 2035.

The switch to zero emission vehicles obviously will not happen overnight.

This is for a number of reasons, among them the lack of available vehicles and refuelling/recharging infrastructure.

So far, the main European manufacturers have been relatively slow bringing products to market.

Partly, this may be due to the manufacturers being benchmarked for their CO_2 emissions at the end of last year by the EU.

This figure will be used as the base for their target to reduce emissions by 15% by 2025 so there was little incentive to reduce emissions until after that figure was set. Subject to a review, they will also have to show a 30% reduction by 2030.

Infrastructure is, and will be, at the core of the adoption of electric and hydrogen fuel cell trucks for the next 20 years, at least.

This is an example of how light commercial vehicles (LCVs) and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) go their separate ways.

Current wisdom has LCVs predominantly home- and depot-charging with public charging used as a limited resource due to its cost per kW.

Heavy trucks will be mainly charged at depot, with hub or public network as a last resort, although that will also be determined by time and the number of locations.

ELECTRIC ROAD TRIAL

One solution being considered is catenary systems. Constructing a series of electric wires above motorways to charge trucks fitted with pantographs is not going to happen overnight, although trials are scheduled to take place.

The Department for Transport (DfT) last month announced funding of £20 million to deliver a series of projects to support the uptake of zero emission trucks.

One of these is an 'electric road system' feasibility study involving a consortium led by Costain, which includes Scania and Siemens Mobility, looking at using catenaries to charge electric trucks dynamically on a 12-mile stretch of road near Scunthorpe.

The trucks come equipped with a battery that charges while they are in motion.

"Investing in proven technologies such as eHighways can help us go further and faster to decarbonise the UK's transport network," says William Wilson, CEO of Siemens Mobility.

"By building on successful trials from other countries like Germany, our trial will help the UK move a step closer to replacing more polluting trucks with clean, efficient, electric HGVs."

Hydrogen has a similar issue to electricity. The refuelling infrastructure is not sufficient and the foreseeable future shows little opportunity at both pipe distribution and on-site production.

This should change over the next five-to-15 years as partnerships such as the Daimler Truck AG and Volvo Group's fuel cell joint venture come to fruition.

The UK Government also last month published its long-awaited hydrogen strategy, which it says will attract billions of pounds investment in clean hydrogen fuel which could be used to power vehicles and heat homes.

> "INVESTING IN PROVEN TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS EHIGHWAYS CAN HELP US GO FURTHER AND FASTER TO DECARBONISE THE UK'S TRANSPORT NETWORK"
>
> **WILLIAM WILSON, SIEMENS MOBILITY**

This includes a public consultation on a preferred hydrogen business model designed to overcome the cost gap between low carbon hydrogen and fossil fuels, as well as a review to support the development of the necessary network and storage infrastructure to underpin the hydrogen sector.

Hydrogen fuel cell is seen by many as the next step in powering the heavier end of the commercial vehicle industry with battery electric for the lighter end. But that is a simplistic view.

For instance, Stellantis has already announced it will be launching a fuel cell version of its successful electric medium van product (Vauxhall Vivaro/Citroën Dispatch/Peugeot Expert) by the end of this year.

Allison Transmissions agrees with the current thinking. "When it comes to wide-spread use of hydrogen fuel cells, the progress of infrastructure will influence the long-term cost of fuel cells versus battery electric vehicles (BEVs)," it says.

"Currently, the larger over-the-road applications seem to be a better fit for a fuel cell as adding battery weight to extend range eats into the payload. For long-distance runs, the shorter refuelling time also works in the fuel cell's favour."

THE COST CONUNDRUM

Cost is another obstacle facing fleets looking to transition to zero emission vehicles. Diesel van and trucks are relatively cheap to buy, but expensive to run, while BEVs are expensive to buy, but cheap to run.

So, in many cases, it will come down to cashflow.

Vans are almost at the switchover point in which the total cost of ownership matches that of a diesel, but trucks have a long way to go.

One area where the economics could tip the scale in favour of electric is if there is a proliferation of zero emission and congestion charging zones around key cities which target certain types of commercial vehicles.

The Government has also committed £582m to continue plug-in grants for cars, vans and trucks until at least 2023.

The truck grant reduces the price of buying zero-emission commercial vehicles. The maximum amount is set at 20% of the purchase price, with up to £25,000 available for the largest HGVs.

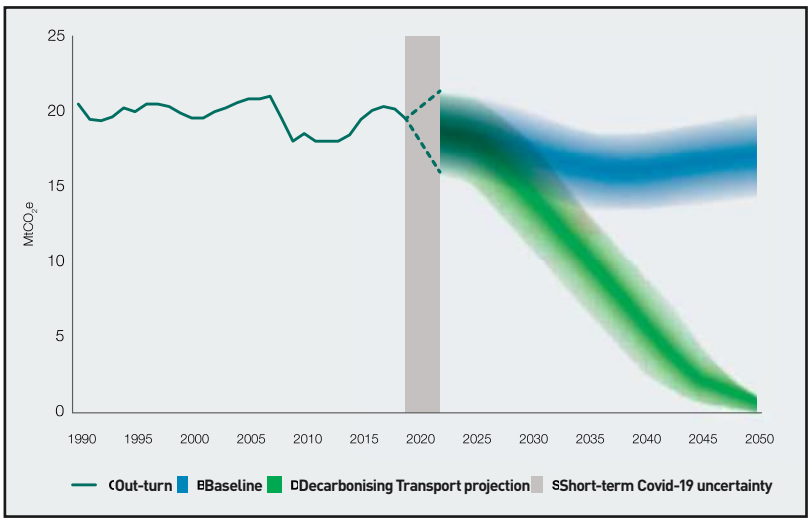
If all the measures set out in the Decarbonising Transport plan are implemented, the Government is forecasting a steady drop in greenhouse gas emissions on a trajectory where they could get to zero in 2050 (see graph below).

The baseline is determined by firm and funded policies, while the projection includes the policies announced by the Government in its DTP, alongside savings from low carbon fuels policy.

However, with vehicle technologies constantly evolving and the cost landscape changing, there is no one set route to achieving zero carbon.

There is no silver bullet as each fleet operation will determine its own solution for a journey which will have many stops along the way.

DECARBONISING TRANSPORT HGV GHG PROJECTIONS, VERSUS THE BASELINE*



** Historic emissions are from published GHG statistics. Future HGV emissions are modelled using the National Transport model, adjusted for Decarbonising Transport measures. The uncertainty bands around projections reflect uncertainty on the form of final policy and uncertainties on future demand for road transport – related to future trends in travel, uptake of connected and autonomous vehicles, fuel prices, GDP growth, and historical volatility. Carbon savings are driven by Decarbonising Transport policies and ambitions. The range of uncertainty in emissions projections falls in the policy line as the proportion of vkms by zero emission vehicles increases – this modelling assumes successful implementation of zero emissions for all categories of HGV.*

LOW CARBON FUELS

Until zero emission trucks are widely available, the Government says it will continue to use a range of measures to cut emissions from the existing heavy goods vehicle (HGV) fleet.

It says its Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation will continue to support the use of sustainable low-carbon ingredients in fuels for use in compatible vehicles, for example through the use of higher blends of biofuels or drop-in fuels.

Using fuel mixtures such as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) can reduce CO_2 emissions by up to 90% compared with regular diesel or biodiesel.

It is renewable and 100% biodegradable, synthesised from waste fats and vegetable oils as well as reducing notifiable particulate matter and NOx emissions.

Compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG) also have a great part to play.

According to Volvo Trucks: "LNG produces significantly lower CO_2 emissions. Using liquified biogas, also known as Bio-LNG, reduces net emissions by up to 100% from tank to wheel, while using natural gas cuts emissions by around 20% compared with ordinary European standard diesel.

"The production of fossil-free biogas requires a greater number of production plants for anaerobic digestion of waste with the possibility of cooling the gas into liquid form.

"Various studies have calculated that just more than 29% of diesel in Europe could be replaced by renewable gas in the form of Bio-LNG by 2030."

According to Iveco, reductions of up to 90% NO_2, 99% particulate matter and 95% CO_2 are possible for vehicles running biomethane fuel.

COMMERCIAL BENEFITS

Green credentials are becoming an increasingly prevalent benchmark for businesses seeking logistics affiliates and, while natural gas brings reductions to carbon footprints, it is beneficial commercially too.

In support of the mission to rapidly decarbonise the UK's transport sector, fuel duty of alternative fuels such as CNG and LNG are locked at 50% of that of diesel until 2032.

Under its decarbonising transport plan, the Government will also encourage modal shift of freight from road to more sustainable alternatives such as rail and inland waterways.

One company which is already doing this is Tesco, which is working to decarbonise its operations and become net zero by 2035.

Transport forms a key part of this and the business has recently invested £5m into its rail network to move freight from road to rail.

Its trains radiate out from its distribution centre to a number of depots, and Tesco estimates the expansion of this service will take 72,000 HGV journeys off the road each year, saving around 24,000 tonnes of CO_2.

It has also committed to electrifying its distribution fleet.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VOLVO FM380 6X2 GLOBETROTTER

Increased driver comfort is just one of this Globetrotter's desirable attributes

By John Lewis

Why specify a big Globetrotter sleeper cab on a 26-tonner? Isn't that rather over the top bearing in mind that Volvo's FM is also available with a standard sleeper?

The answer revolves around driver recruitment and retention in a climate of increasing shortage.

Many 26-tonner drivers have nights away from home and want a bit more comfort when they do. Those that do not will still appreciate the extra space the high roof the Globetrotter cab offers, and fleets will welcome the contribution it makes to healthy residual values when disposal time rolls round.

It is the interior space that stands out when you climb aboard, especially if you have previously been driving a day cab FM. Ample headroom is complemented by plenty of room to the rear of the driver's seat, and the large roof hatch floods it with light.

Fitted with a Lawrence David curtainsider body and with 380PS on tap, the 5,600mm-wheelbase FM 26-tonner we drove was more manoeuvrable than expected thanks to a rear-steer axle. It made swinging around tight curves and threading a way along a narrow section of highway decorated with cones, a doddle.

Improved manoeuvrability should also make it less likely that the body's side-skirts will come to grief on challenging urban routes. Large rear-view mirrors ensure you can easily see what the back end of the truck is doing and react accordingly.

TWISTING HILLY ROUTE

The rear steer-axle came into its own again as the FM380 negotiated a twisting hilly route with at least one severe adverse camber. The FM felt stable throughout – three axles grip better than two – and rode well thanks to full air suspension.

Performance was as impressive as when we drove the smaller 18-tonne FM. Again, there was no lack of torque, the I-Shift 12-speed automated box delivered it smoothly, and progress was maintained even on the steepest sections of the journey despite the fact that the 26-tonner was running at maximum gross weight.

Activated at the touch of a button, Descent Control ensured we did not come to grief as the road in front dropped sharply away.

A facility not sampled, given the route, was the I-See predictive cruise control.

As you approach a hill, data is downloaded from a high-resolution topographical map. The information is then used to maximise the truck's kinetic energy and cut fuel consumption by up to 5% compared with a model without this feature, says Volvo.

What it means, in effect, is that I-See anticipates the right gear and speed to enable the truck to mount the incline without burning too much diesel and also maintaining journey times.

What is of greater use in urban areas is the ability to spot vulnerable road users while at the wheel of a comparatively-bulky vehicle. FM's blind spot cameras deliver a clear picture on a newly-designed nine-inch display mounted on the left-hand side of the driver's cockpit.

The same display allows the driver to access other functions, including the sat-nav system.

In-cab noise levels were low throughout the exercise with only the occasional rumble from what was clearly an unstressed engine; and an equally-untroubled transmission.

The desire to keep drivers happy plus the potential for greater second-hand appeal suggests opting for the Globetrotter cab might be worth it. Once again, Volvo has produced a well-built workhorse.

	MODEL TESTED
SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	Volvo FM 380 6x2 Globetrotter Rigid 26 tonnes
Engine	10.8 litre diesel
Power (PS)	380
Torque (Nm)	1,800
Payload (kg)	14,000

THE LAST WORD

MICHELLE JUNNOR

UK FLEET SALES AND OPERATIONS MANAGER, COOPER TIRE & RUBBER COMPANY

After more than a decade as a professional figure skater, Junnor has moved from gliding on ice to helping clients keep a grip in slippery conditions ... she's now involved in selling quality tyres

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is you can never be 100% happy all the time, it's not realistic. Learn to ride the waves!

The song I would have on my driving playlist is Adele's *Rolling in The Deep.*

My first memory associated with a car was my great uncle John's Ford Cortina. It was gold. During the summer he'd take us on a trip to Helensburgh (west of Glasgow) for ice cream.

My favourite movie quote is "just a drink – a martini, shaken not stirred," from the James Bond film, *Goldfinger.* A classic movie where the Aston DB ran on Avon Tyres.

If money was no object I'd have a Lamborghini Aventador SVJ

A book that I would recommend others read is *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* by Heather Morris.

My hobbies and interests? I was once a professional figure skater, representing Scotland as a teen. From the age of six to 17, I travelled across the UK competing and collecting silverware. My hobbies now include working out at the gym and cheering on my two boys at their football and rugby clubs.

My pet hate is bad manners, it costs nothing to be polite.

If I were made transport minister for the day I'd install drive-over readers at every fuel station in a bid to educate drivers on their tyre condition and reduce tyre-related accidents.

Why fleet?
My specialism is in solution-based sales, so I'm on a mission to help fleet customers find the right solution to maximise efficiency and optimise their up time.

How I got here
I started in enterprise services and software for a leading IT company. The opportunity to join a global tyre manufacturer and leader in innovation was a great fit for me and helped me to take my career to a different level. Moving from IT to tyres isn't necessarily as strange as it might seem at first.

Latest products, developments, and achievements
In Q4 we will introduce the Cooper Evolution Van All Season tyre. It will sit alongside the Cooper Evolution Van summer and Cooper WM-Van winter products, meaning we will offer a van tyre for all conditions. In Q1 next year, we will launch the Avon AS12 All Season Van. Recently, we were commended in the 2021 WhatTyre Awards for the Cooper Zeon 4XS Sport (SUV) and Cooper Zeon CS8 (Summer) tyres.

My company in three words
Agile, innovative, driven.

Career influence
Mary Barra of General Motors. Having started as a co-op student, her hands-on approach and tenacity saw her climb through the ranks all the way up to become the first female CEO of a major global automaker and is Forbes' seventh most powerful woman in the world.

Advice to fleet newcomers
Be prepared to get your hands dirty. My early days of training involved truck tyre fleet inspections. I was fortunate to have a great induction plan that was supported by a hub manager who became a great mentor and friend.

If I wasn't in fleet
Something involving electric vehicles (EVs). They are heralded as being the air quality solution (at least in the immediate future) and it's a side of the transport industry that really interests me.

Next issue: Colin Ferguson, chief executive officer at The Algorithm People

WHICH EV IS BEST FOR YOUR FLEET?

www.fleetnews.co.uk/ev-data

Whether you are beginning your research or you have a good idea of what you're interested in, the electric car and van data tool can help you with all the essential information, from range, tax and charging data* for electric cars and vans to stats on acceleration, cargo volume and the number of seats.

*Data supplied by EV-Database (EVDB)