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AWARDS
Summer Garden Party
2021

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Electric
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THE BIG PICTURE

Just as we were thinking the much-anticipated Transport Decarbonisation Plan would be delayed to the autumn, the Government started feeding messages to the media that it would be published on July 14.

It ended up coming out in the afternoon, mainly because ministers were still arguing over the small print until the eleventh hour.

The big announcement is the news that all new HGVs will need to be zero-emission from 2040. Critics are sceptical about the timescales, but there are already electric trucks undergoing fleet trials, particularly for city or regional operations.

With trucks typically kept for seven-to-10 years, operators really need to start planning in earnest within the next decade.

The Government is still giving nothing away about how it intends to plug the massive deficit in company car and VED tax take as electric cars take over. The report had only the suggestion of 2024-2025 as a "potential date" for a new CO₂ emissions regulatory regime for vehicles which could affect manufacturers' sales targets.

Meanwhile, environmental campaigners will not be happy about the lack of mention of Highways England's £27bn road programme – they were looking for it to be scaled back.

Just prior to the TDP's release, the Institute for Public Policy Research thinktank called for the ban on new ICE cars/vans to be brought forward to 2025 for 'large commercial fleets' and 2022 for public sector fleets.

Given the delays on delivery times caused by the global semiconductor shortage, both timescales are rather optimistic. It's not as simple as saying, let's switch to electric now. There's a lot of planning required, particularly infrastructure to make a workplace EV ready and that can run into months, if not years if you have local grid capacity issues.

Nevertheless, the Government has committed to making its own fleet zero emissions by 2027, with 25% making the switch by 2022.

■ Turn to page 41 for our 50-page review of the 2021 Fleet News Awards Summer Garden Party at Ascot Racecourse. It was a fantastic day enjoyed by almost 900 guests – the showers didn't dampen the spirits! We were thoroughly entertained by fabulous host Russell Kane while applauding the excellence of our 36 winners.



Stephen Briers,
editor-in-chief,
Fleet News

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Burning question:
If you could reverse one decision, what would it be?

EDITORIAL

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Two decisions, but both sports-related: giving up competitive swimming when I was 12 and stopping playing league basketball when I was 15

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Not buying a Lancia Delta Integrale for £2,500 when I had the chance – £30k+ now

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By Gareth Roberts

The key role the fleet industry will have to play in helping the UK achieve net zero emissions by 2050 has been reflected in the Government's transport decarbonisation plan.

The 220-page document, published last week alongside a series of consultations and a delivery plan for transitioning to zero emissions cars and vans by 2035, includes proposals to ban the sale of new diesel heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) from 2040, and a pledge to maintain low company car tax rates for electric vehicles (EVs) up to 2025.

The sale of new internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles weighing from 3.5 to 26 tonnes would end from 2035 and from 2040 for vehicles weighing more than 26 tonnes.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has launched a consultation on the proposed dates and whether

they should be extended to HGVs using low carbon fuels, or if the maximum permissible weights of zero emission or alternatively fuelled HGVs should increase to allow for their generally heavier powertrains. It closes on September 3.

DfT had previously announced a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with hybrids banned from 2035 (fleetnews.co.uk, November 19, 2020).

"The ambitious timescales involved in the phase-outs for the sale of polluting cars, vans and trucks leave little room for error," said Gerry Keaney, chief executive of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA).

"It is vital that the policymakers continue to engage with a wide cross-section of road users to understand the risks, challenges and opportunities that are being thrown up by this swift transition."

He added that the Government's

'greenprint' provides some clarity and certainty for road users, but there are still "major questions" that need answering, including what longer-term plans the Treasury has for motoring taxation.

The transport decarbonisation plan also sets out how the Government intends to improve public transport, creating a net zero rail network by 2050, ensuring net zero domestic aviation emissions by 2040 and leading the transition to green shipping.

Removing tailpipe emissions from cars and vans is fundamental to decarbonising transport, as they are responsible for almost a fifth (19%) of the UK's total domestic greenhouse gas emissions.

HGVs accounted for 16% of the transport emissions, second only to cars and vans, while representing just 1% of vehicles on UK roads.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said: "We must deliver a step

change in the breadth and scale of our ambition to reduce transport's greenhouse gas emissions to reach net zero."

FLEETS 'KEY' TO NET ZERO

The Government says that fleet operators transitioning to zero emission cars and vans are vital to ensuring it achieves its decarbonisation ambitions and enabling the UK to attract a sufficient supply of vehicles.

Many companies are looking to switch. The EV100 global leadership campaign has launched the UK Electric Fleet Coalition, which has secured commitments to transition more than 700,000 vehicles to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2030.

AstraZeneca, which operates 17,000 vehicles, aims to have a fully electric fleet by 2025, while both Centrica (almost 11,000 vehicles) and Mitie (7,000 vehicles) also expect to have transitioned to an all-electric

Long-awaited decarbonisation plan published

Measures announced include Government plans to ban sale of new diesel HGVs from 2040

fleet within the same timescale.

The transport decarbonisation plan also recognises that the vehicles bought by fleets will play an important role in feeding the second-hand market.

National Grid, which operates more than 2,700 cars and vans as well as 54 HGVs, is aiming to have a zero-emission fleet by 2030.

Fleet manager Lorna McAtear welcomed the Government's transport strategy, including the proposed dates for ending sale of diesel trucks and HGVs. "As a fleet manager, I now know what I need to do; it's that certainty, we have the dates, we now need to work towards them."

McAtear also welcomed the "consistency" on benefit in kind (BIK) for electric company cars.

"The Government has listened to fleets and recognised the important role they have to play in achieving net zero and now it's put the measures in place to try and do it," she said.

The Government says it wants to lead by example when it comes to decarbonising fleet operations and has committed to transitioning 25% of its car fleet to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) by 2022.

It has also pledged that 100% of its car and van fleet, more than 40,000 vehicles, will be pure electric by 2027. Currently, almost a third (31%) of the DfT's car fleet is classed as ultra-low emission, though no figures were available for the whole of the Government fleet.

Many local authorities and the wider public sector are also taking action to decarbonise their fleets. For example, NHS England, as part of its 'Net Zero National Health Service' plan, has set a commitment that 90% of the NHS fleet must use low, ultra-low and zero emission vehicles by 2028.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of London has committed that all new cars and vans, including response vehicles, in

the GLA group (encompassing Transport for London, the London Fire Brigade and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, among others) must be zero emission capable from 2025.

BIK RATES FOR COMPANY CARS

To help fleets make the switch away from diesel and petrol, the transport decarbonisation plan also includes a commitment to keeping BIK tax rates low for zero emission company cars until March 2025.

The Treasury introduced a 0% BIK tax rate for pure electric company cars in 2020/21, rising to 1% the following tax year (2021/22).

Company car tax rates had already been published up until 2024/25, with the BIK rate for zero emission cars rising to 2% in 2022/23 and staying at that rate for the tax years 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The DfT says that pure electric cars will also be exempt from vehicle

excise duty (VED) until at least March 2025, while enhanced capital allowances when buying a new zero emission car for business use, allowing for 100% of the cost of the car to be written off against the taxable income of the period in which it was bought, will remain available over the same time period.

Furthermore, there is a commitment to ensure the plug-in car and van grant is available until at least 2022/23.

Meryem Brassington, electrification propositions lead at Lex Autolease, said: "As a means of gathering many of the disparate threads and plans that make up the Government's exciting and ambitious net zero strategy, the plan is to be welcomed."

"The Government's commitment to drive its sustainability ambitions forward, and to consult with industry on the best way to do this, is also commendable."

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◉ ZERO-EMISSION MANDATE

To ensure adequate supply of EVs into the UK market ahead of the 2030 ban, the Government is also consulting on the design of a new domestic regulatory regime for road vehicle CO₂ emissions, including the possible introduction of a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee.

A ZEV mandate establishes sales percentage targets that must be met by manufacturers, requiring them to sell a certain proportion of pure EVs.

Manufacturers earn credits for selling ZEVs, rather than the targets being monitored directly, so they can meet their target either by earning credits through the sale of ZEVs, or from buying excess credits from manufacturers that have overperformed against their own target.

A Green Paper on a new road vehicle CO₂ emissions regulatory framework for the UK, published alongside the transport decarbonisation plan, sets out the options which include developing the fuel efficiency and CO₂ emissions regulations already in place, or using ZEV sales targets alongside CO₂ regulation.

The Government says it will also seek to define the 'significant zero emission capability' that all new cars and vans will be required to deliver between 2030 and 2035.

Jon Lawes, managing director of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, said it is "positive" that the Government's transport decarbonisation plan has committed to phase-out dates for all non-zero emission vehicles.

However, he argued: "We must follow through with robust policies, such as the potential ZEV mandate, to ensure that the automotive industry meets these targets and the rising demand for ZEVs from businesses and consumers."

With both Stellantis and Nissan having committed to increasing EV production in the UK (see page 12), Lawes says the UK is in a strong

position to "significantly ramp up its EV production" in the coming years.

"Introducing a ZEV mandate would be a milestone policy to encourage all manufacturers to consider their vehicle output and establish ambitious strategies to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles," he said.

EU ICE BAN FROM 2035

The UK's decarbonisation strategy was published at the same time as the EU launched its 'Fit for 55' plan.

It has set a target of banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2035 as part of its decarbonisation plan. It also includes a reduction to zero CO₂ emissions from new cars sold in the bloc by 2035, as it seeks a 55% cut in CO₂ emissions by 2030 compared with 2021 levels.

This accelerates the previous plan, which targeted a 37.5% reduction by the end of the decade.

Included in the proposed EU legislation is a requirement for countries to install public charging points no more than 60km (37.3 miles) apart on major roads by 2025 in a bid to boost EV adoption.

In the UK, an electric vehicle infrastructure strategy is promised by the end of the year, which will set out the Government's vision for infrastructure rollout, and roles for the public and private sectors in achieving it. By 2030, it expects to have 2,500 rapid charge points across the strategic road network, and 6,000 by 2035.

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

The decarbonisation plan makes a commitment to support the private sector to deliver at least six rapid charge points at every motorway service area in England by 2023.

■ Why decarbonisation is not enough – Tomorrow's Fleet, page 19

The transport decarbonisation plan – what will this mean for businesses and company fleets?



STEPHEN JOSEPH,
CHAIR OF SMART
TRANSPORT

So, after a long wait, the Government has finally unveiled its plan to decarbonise transport. The main plan runs to 220 pages, and there are nine supporting documents, so absorbing it all will take time. But some key themes can be seen.

First, the Government has repeated its commitment to end sales of internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and vans by 2030, and hybrids by 2035. This gives businesses a timescale to work to, and the plan and supporting documents flesh out some of the details.

There are commitments to funding and installing charging infrastructure, with some specifics like six rapid charge points at every motorway service area by 2023. The workplace charging scheme is being extended to charities and SMEs (small-to-medium enterprises) and, from later this year, all new housing will have to have charging technology installed.

Favourable company car tax rates for zero-emission cars are guaranteed until 2025 and zero-emission cars and vans will continue to pay no vehicle excise duty (VED) or van benefit charges.

Perhaps the big news in the document is that this approach is being extended to all other vehicles. There is a target for all heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to be zero emission by 2040. The Government is consulting on dates to end the sale of new buses and coaches that aren't zero emission.

The plan includes a lot of measures to change travel behaviour. Some just restate previous announcements on funding for cycling, walking and buses, but there are some new measures, notably a commitment to increase railfreight and its mode share.

Of perhaps most interest to businesses is the idea of a 'commute zero' programme, which will work with large employers on measuring and reporting commuting emissions and support the take up of lower carbon commuting. There is also a commitment to promote car sharing and increase average vehicle occupancy.

With all this though, a number of questions are ducked. The construction of new roads and runways continues, and Highways England itself is hardly mentioned, despite its £27 billion road programme.

The plan highlights the disparity between the cost of motoring, where fuel duty has remained the same for more than 10 years, and the cost of public transport which has increased significantly, but then says very little about what it will do to address this.

And perhaps the biggest elephant in the room is what the Government will do when fuel duty revenue plunges as electric vehicles take over. Will this mean road user charging, some kind of per-mile charge? The plan only hints at it.

For businesses, then, the plan gives some certainty about destinations and in some cases how we will get there.

But there are still a lot of uncertainties on the road to zero emissions from transport.



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Laing O'Rourke fails in bid for relief on grey fleet mileage payments

Ruling is contrary to previous similar case won by Total People at the Court of Appeal

By Gareth Roberts

Laing O'Rourke has lost a £2.2 million claim for relief on grey fleet business mileage payments paid to employees at the firm.

The first-tier tribunal decision comes almost 10 years after the Court of Appeal ruled in favour of Total People (now Cheshire Employment and Skills) on a similar National Insurance Contributions (NICs) claim.

Total People's seven-year legal battle related to an NI refund claim based on the difference between the HMRC 40p per mile (ppm) approved mileage allowance payment (AMAP) rate (now 45p) and the 12ppm paid by the employer plus an additional lump sum paid to the employees for using their private cars on business (fleet-news.co.uk, November 26, 2012).

The value of the amount claimed was approximately £146,000 or around £1,000 per employee, which was subsequently paid by HMRC.

In what was seen as the first test case following Total People's victory at the Court of Appeal in 2012, Laing O'Rourke argued that its car allowance scheme should also qualify for relief from NICs on payments made to employees. HMRC said relief did not apply, because the payments could not be defined as relevant motoring expenditure.

After the evidence was heard in court in February, Judge Tracey Bowler reached a decision last month, ruling in favour of HMRC.

John Messore, managing partner at specialist consultants Innovation Professional Services, said: "Laing O'Rourke had not sufficiently demon-



strated that the car allowances paid were in respect of the use of the employee's car and therefore did not fall into the definition of relevant motoring expenditure."

The judge said that the burden of proof lay with Laing O'Rourke and, if it had been able to show that the car allowance was a payment made in respect of the use of the car, then NIC relating to the business mileage element would have been due back to the company.

A Laing O'Rourke spokesperson said: "We are considering the judgement of the first-tier tribunal and do not wish to comment further at this stage."

It has until August 3 to apply for

permission to appeal, 56 days from when it received the tribunal decision.

However, if Laing O'Rourke appeals the first-tier tribunal decision, it will not be able to introduce any new witnesses, new facts or new arguments.

That was open to the company at the first-tier tribunal stage, but the appeal, which would be heard in an upper-tier tribunal, will simply be another judge deciding whether, given the evidence that was presented at this stage, the verdict reached was reasonable.

Out of 250 companies that put in so-called protective claims in the wake of the original 2012 Total People decision, around 200 have pulled out of the process, according to Messore.

HMRC finally decided to give one of the remaining claimants the opportunity to have its day in court when it issued Laing O'Rourke with a Section 8 determination, ruling that the company's cash allowance did not qualify as relevant motoring expenditure. Other cases are now also in the pipeline after notices were issued to some of those companies that have continued to argue their particular scheme should qualify for NIC relief. The first is expected to be

heard in the courts in November.

Peter Moroz, also a managing partner at Innovation Professional Services, said: "Companies have little to lose and everything to gain by either submitting protective claims or holding on to the claims they already have in place. We even know individual drivers who have submitted their own claims."

Judge Bowler said "there are numerous boundaries and distinctions in the income tax legislation and in particular, in the treatment of pay and benefits provided to employees".

"Simply because a particular result can be achieved in one way does not mean that the provision of something economically similar in many respects results in even the same income tax treatment," she added.

Messore said: "Broadly speaking, this translates to if you make subtle changes to how you pay people for their mileage, it can have a profound impact on the tax treatment, but we should not assume that you will get the same outcome for NIC."

It heaps further uncertainty on future NIC relief against business mileage and employers with similar claims will hope for some clarity when the next case is heard later in the year.

LAING O'ROURKE HAD NOT SUFFICIENTLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE CAR ALLOWANCES PAID WERE IN RESPECT OF THE USE OF THE EMPLOYEE'S CAR

JOHN MESSORE, INNOVATION PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



THE ALL-ELECTRIC

i4



Search: BMW i4

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Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO2 emissions: 0 g/km. Electric energy consumption (combined): 16.1 to 18.4 kWh/100Km / 2.8 – 3.9 miles/kWh. The i4 electric range 258 – 366 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The i4 is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

Investments give 'major shot in the arm' for UK's Road to Zero strategy

Announcements from Nissan and Stellantis will accelerate transition to electric vehicles

By Gareth Roberts

Major electric vehicle (EV) announcements from Stellantis and Nissan will help fleets "accelerate" their transition to electrification, according to Lex Autolease.

Nissan has unveiled plans for a £1 billion EV hub at its Sunderland plant, investing up to £423 million to build a new-generation, all-electric crossover, while its battery partner, Envision AESC, has earmarked £450m to build the UK's first gigafactory adjacent to the Nissan site (fleetnews.co.uk, July 1).

Envision AESC already owns and operates Europe's first battery plant in Sunderland, established in 2012 for the localisation of Nissan Leaf battery production.

The new gigafactory represents an initial 9GWh plant, with potential future investment of £1.8bn by Envision AESC, generating up to 25GWh and creating 4,500 new jobs in the region by 2030. Plant potential is up to 35GWh.

Nissan says that the new facility will increase the cost-competitiveness of EV batteries produced in the UK, including through a new Gen5 battery cell with 30% more energy density which improves range and efficiency.

Lei Zhang, founder and chief executive officer of Envision Group, said the new EV battery factory built



on its ambition to make longer-range batteries for EVs "affordable and accessible" for millions more motorists, adding: "This will put the north-east at the heart of a new EV hub in the UK, collaborating on R&D around the whole battery lifecycle, from storage, to second life use, V2G (vehicle-to-grid) smart charging and closed loop recycling."

ELECTRIC CARS AND VANS

Stellantis, meanwhile, has announced a £100m investment in Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant to produce electric cars and vans for Vauxhall, Opel, Peugeot and Citroën brands (fleetnews.co.uk, July 9). Vehicles produced there will be for both domestic and export markets.

The plant's transformation will include a new body shop, upgraded general assembly and the creation of an on-site battery pack assembly.

Further investment into the Ellesmere Port site, says Stellantis, could come with the creation of a new UK parts distribution centre.

Richard Jones, managing director at Lex Autolease, says that the two announcements represent a "major shot in the arm" for the country's Road to Zero strategy.

He explained: "By ensuring the

product supply and supporting infrastructure is in place, we can continue to help individual drivers and businesses accelerate their transition towards an electric future."

The Ellesmere Port announcement is part of a wider £25bn electrification strategy from Stellantis, which includes switching Vauxhall to an EV-only brand by 2028.

The automotive group, which owns 14 car brands, has set a target for pure EVs and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) to account for 70% of its European sales by 2030.

The company is also targeting for the total cost of ownership of EVs to be equivalent to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles by 2026.

It plans to build five battery factories across Europe and North America and says it will reduce the cost of batteries by 60% by 2030.

However, unlike Nissan, no announcement was made on the potential for one of those gigafactories to be located in the UK.

New 'rules-of-origin' regulations agreed as part of the Brexit deal mean that batteries will have to be produced in the UK or Europe by 2027 if British cars are to avoid tariffs.

Speaking at the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders' annual

international automotive summit, Alison Jones, Stellantis UK group managing director, said that getting more battery gigafactories in the UK was key to the survival of vehicle manufacturing in Britain (fleetnews.co.uk, June 29).

After months of talks described as "intense", it is understood ministers agreed to about £30m of financial support for the Stellantis investment.

The Labour opposition says the Government needs to increase the £500m currently offered to attract battery investors in order to protect the UK's other car plants. Labour has proposed a fund of £1.5bn.

Dominic Tribe, director and automotive sector specialist at management consultancy Vendigital, believes Nissan's decision to bring its battery manufacturing capabilities in-house helps shore up its supply chain.

"The entire automotive sector is tackling the puzzle of how to scale up to meet growing demand for electric cars in a cost-efficient way," he said.

"In order to achieve the Government's legal requirement to phase out the production of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, much more investment in gigafactories will be required and Nissan won't be the only UK OEM to take this approach."

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iX



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Mpg (l/100km): Not applicable. CO2 emissions: 0 g/km. Electric energy consumption (combined): 20 to 21 kWh/100Km / 2.9 – 3 miles/kWh. The iX xDrive40 electric range: 246-257 miles. The iX xDrive50 electric range: 366-380 miles. These figures were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. The iX is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

Mayor says CAZ restrictions should extend and apply to all major roads

Bid to improve Manchester air quality undermined as zone only covers local authority roads

By Gareth Roberts

The Mayor of Greater Manchester has called for Government to consider minimum air quality standards for parts of the strategic road network (SRN) to help curb emissions.

The region will have the UK's largest clean air zone (CAZ), covering 10 boroughs and 2.8 million residents, when it goes live from May 30, 2022.

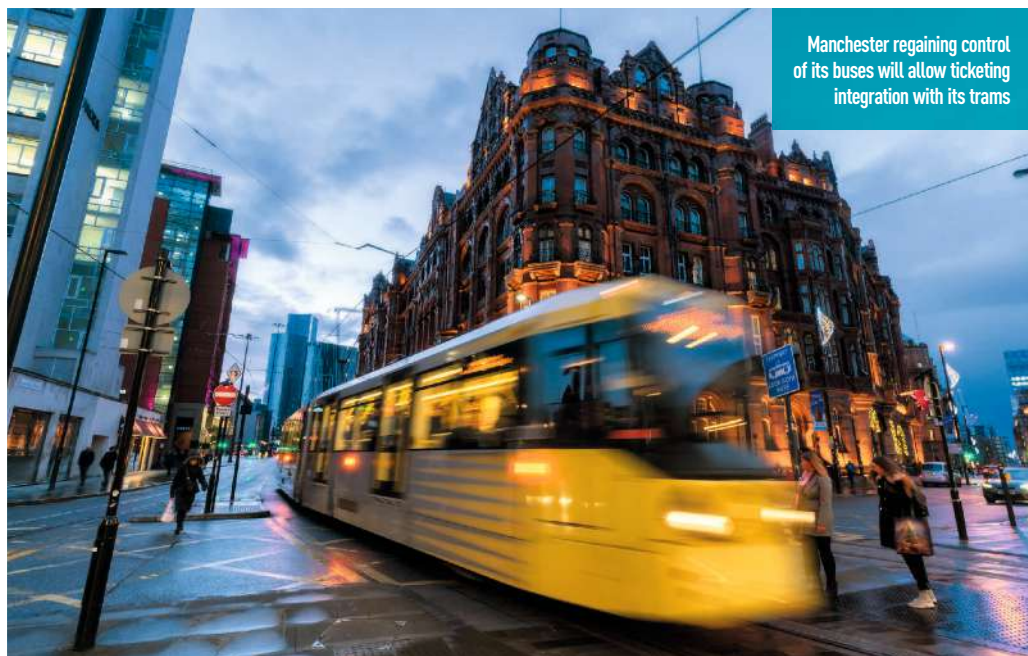
The class C zone will charge non-compliant coaches and HGVs £60, and taxis and private hire vehicles £7.50, with a temporary exemption for Greater Manchester-licensed vehicles until May 31, 2023.

Older vans and minibuses will also get an exemption until the same date, but will be charged £10 thereafter.

Charges will be based on vehicles meeting certain emission standards – Euro6/VI or better for diesel engines, and Euro4 or better for petrol.

However, Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, says he is disappointed that the new CAZ will only apply to roads under local authority control. Major routes, not subject to the restrictions, are controlled by Highways England.

"We've been creating a large clean



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air zone for Greater Manchester, because we have illegal levels of air pollution in all 10 of our boroughs," he explained.

"That motorway network cuts through pretty every element of our city region, but, currently, Highways England is saying it won't apply the clean air zone to the strategic route network. It's only the local roads that we control that will be subject to the clean air zone.

"I can understand in the short term where they are coming from, but it's still the case that the pollution coming off those vehicles comes very close to some of our poorest communities where the M6 slices through Wigan or the M602 in Salford.

Burnham told delegates at the International Net Zero Local Leadership conference, organised by UK100 and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), that Highways England's stance is "not sustainable" in the longer term and the Government will have to work with the freight industry to allow similar minimum CAZ pollution standards to apply to the SRN.

"Post pandemic we have to become much more serious about health," he added. "We feel in going

ahead with our clean air zone that things we've tolerated up until now, we shouldn't tolerate any more."

Ministers have agreed to the inclusion of a strategically important trans-Pennine section of the A57 and A628, that passes through the villages of Hollingworth and Mottram.

The local council, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and Highways England are trying to establish how the charging will be applied to this section of road and, as a result, it is not expected to be included when the CAZ first opens.

Sections of the A575 and A580 near Worsley could also be included, subject to local authority approval, with a consultation planned.

Highways England is also working with local authorities in several parts of the country to help businesses make the switch by giving them the opportunity to operate an electric vehicle (EV) for free for two months.

The scheme, funded by Highways England, was piloted with Energy Saving Trust and launched with Leeds City Council last year.

Working with the Leeds council, the operator of England's SRN spent almost £2 million on the project, with a further £920,000 coming from the

local council. New schemes have now been launched in Coventry, Kent and Nottingham, as well as Sheffield and Bristol, which are setting up their own schemes.

INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Burnham says Manchester's CAZ is an opportunity to change the vehicles on the region's roads. He also sees it as a "catalyst" to create a "London-style public transport system".

Buses have recently been brought under local authority control for the first time in 35 years, which will allow them to combine with trams in Manchester, creating a "simple tap-in tap-out system", he said.

"It's that integrated consistent ticketing approach that I think will tip the balance in favour of public transport and away from the car."

Burnham wants other UK cities to be able to operate an integrated public transport system like London's.

"The truth of the matter is we've allowed the car to be king in city regions outside of the capital," he explained.

"That is a failure of all Governments, including the one I was in, to invest and a failure to align planning to a good transport policy."



“WE’VE ALLOWED THE CAR TO BE KING IN CITY REGIONS OUTSIDE OF THE CAPITAL”

**ANDY BURNHAM,
MAYOR OF GREATER
MANCHESTER**

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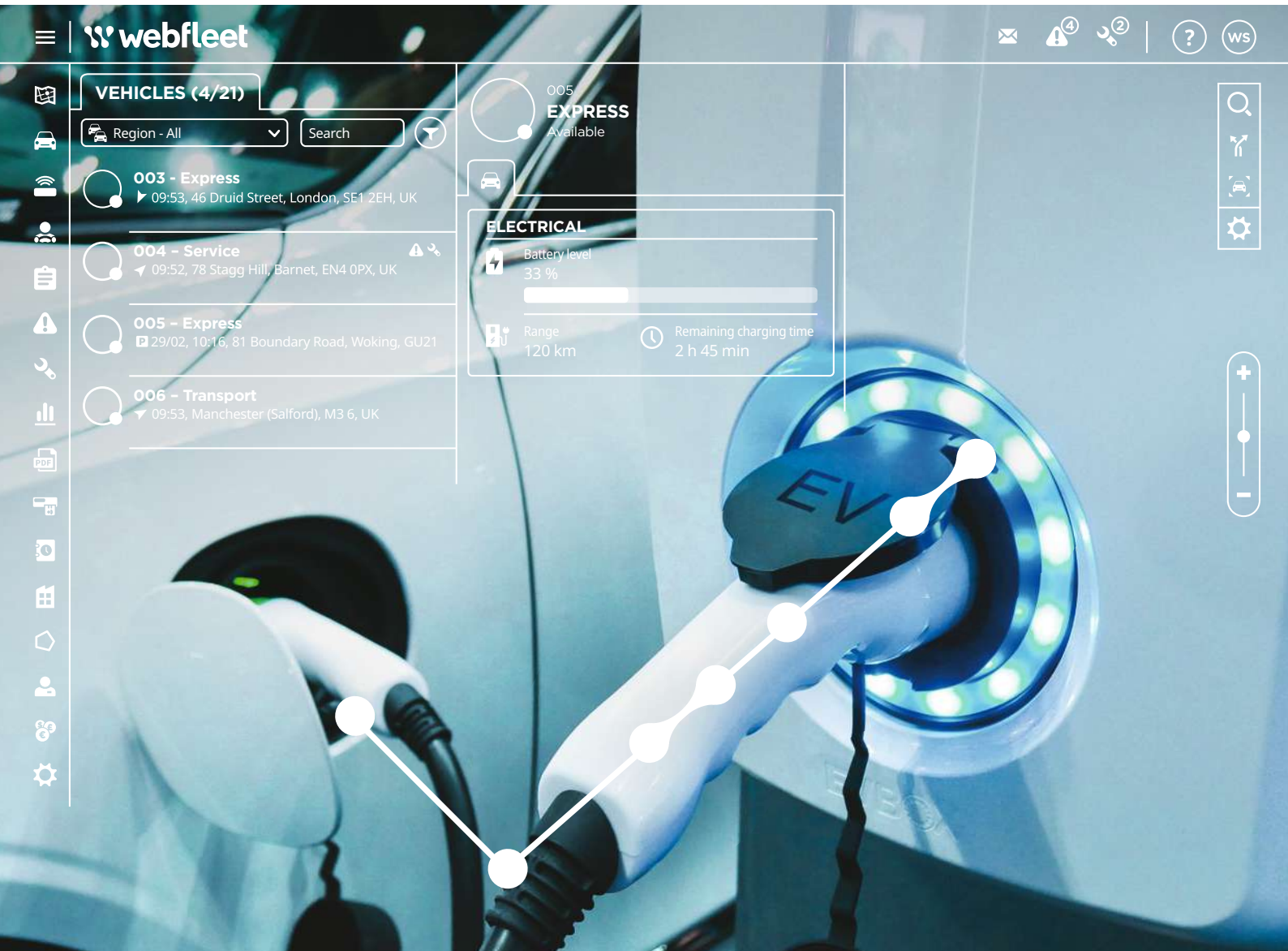
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(l/100km): Not applicable. CO₂ emissions: 0 g/km. Electric range: 238-298 miles (dependent on model and battery size), charge and condition, driving style, vehicle payload, vehicle electronics, heating and climate settings. Tested under WLTP Kind (BIK) for electric vehicles is 1% until April 2022. It is planned to change to 2% in tax year 2022/23.

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DECARBONISATION ALONE IS 'NOT ENOUGH' TO TRANSFORM UK TRANSPORT

The route to net zero emissions and the future of mobility were on the agenda at the Smart Transport Conference, organised by *Fleet News's* sister brand. **Andrew Ryan** reports

Decarbonising the UK's transport system will take more than just providing the right technologies, delegates at the Smart Transport Conference heard.


In November last year, the Government announced its 10-point plan to decarbonise the UK, with transport one of those areas highlighted. This included increased use of green public

transport, measures to reduce emissions through increased cycling and walking, as well as an accelerated transition to zero emission vehicles.

The Government has this month published its transport decarbonisation plan, which sets out transport's route to net zero for the first time.

"It's clear our future economic prosperity will be just as dependent on transport as it was in the past," said transport minister Rachel Maclean.

"The goal should not be to curtail mobility in the name of climate change, but to go further and faster to make travel as clean as possible. Over the past few months, we've seen a lot of trials at scale as part of our future transport zones, located in the West Midlands, Derby and Nottingham, Portsmouth and Southampton, and the West of England Combined Authority.

"They will allow innovative businesses to work 

With a range of local bodies such as councils, hospitals, airports and universities to test new ways to improve mobility for people and goods.

"For example, a mobility credit scheme has recently launched in the West Midlands which encourages the use of sustainable transport by allowing residents to trade in their old, polluting cars and receive £3,000-worth of mobility credits on a dedicated credit card.

"It's proved popular with credit spent on a range of modes, including e-scooters, rental cars, bike shares and new bus services across the county."

There are now 5,000 rental e-scooters in use in 32 areas of the UK after the trials were fast-tracked last year, with more than two million journeys having taken place.

However, the transformation of the UK's transport system may not be plain sailing, with many potential obstacles in the way.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT 'A GREAT WORRY'

This was highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic as the number of people using public transport dropped significantly while demand for used cars surged. "Public transport post-pandemic is a great worry," said Huw Merriman, chair of the Government's Transport Select Committee.

"We've seen car use return to normal levels, but we've not seen a return with regards to bus and nothing like it with regard to rail.

"I think it was a big mistake for the Government to put the message out that public transport isn't safe. When we spoke to the people that run the Singapore Public Transport Authority, they said they deliberately didn't do that at the start of the pandemic because they knew it would be hard to recover from that situation.

"It's a huge shame because those that run public transport in the UK have kept it clean, safe and easy to use through the pandemic, and it is absolutely essential that we send the message out that rail, bus and other forms of public transport are safe to use.

"If people don't use them, prices will go up or those services may go because, when the Government is looking at funding, it's clear that it won't continue to subsidise public transport if the public isn't using it."

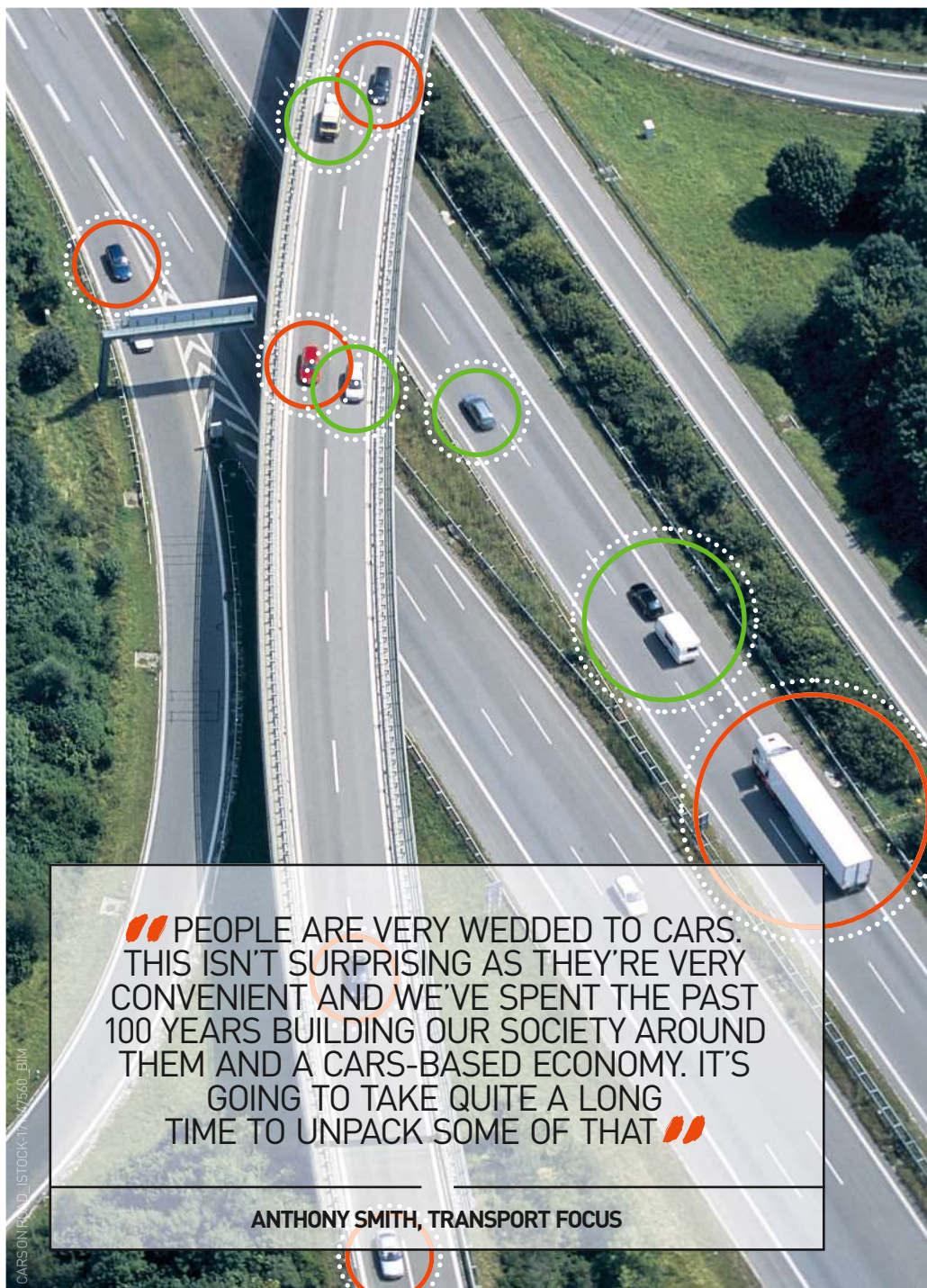
NO CONGESTION SOLUTION

Anthony Smith, chief executive of independent consumer watchdog Transport Focus, told the conference that decarbonisation of transport will not be enough to solve the UK's transport issues, such as congestion.

"I think decarbonising is easy, in a way, because transport users don't have to do much themselves," he said.

"Behaviour change is much more difficult. We've just finished some focus group work on sustainability, transport and consumers, and it's sobering stuff.

"People are very wedded to cars. This isn't surprising as they're very convenient and we've spent the past 100 years building our society around them and a cars-based economy. It's going to take quite a long time to unpack some of that. I think there's a real risk that if we focus on decarbonisation and less on behavioural change, we can go 'that was great, wasn't it' but have got



rows of electric vehicles (EVs) everywhere jamming up the roads."

Cost and convenience are the two factors which people consider when deciding on their mode of transport, he said.

"If it's better value for people and more convenient to take the bus than use other transport modes, people do it," he added.

"I think the best way the transport industry can save the planet, frankly, is to run the buses and trains on time.

"Make them the best consumer choice, get people to try them and make them the obvious way to get around. That's the way we will eventually get behaviour change."

Smith said the feedback from focus groups run by Transport Focus has been that until there is a penalty for using a car, such as road pricing, then it will be difficult to disincentivise road transport because "for a lot of people, the car still offers unparalleled cost and convenience".

POLITICAL HOT POTATO

Road pricing has been a political hot potato for many governments, with the Labour administration of 1997 to 2010 looking at a national scheme in great detail.

The then-transport secretary Alistair Darling proposed a scheme in which every vehicle would be installed with satellite tracking. ➔

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❗ The device would calculate individual road charges varying from 2p per mile (ppm) to £1.34ppm dependent on location and time of day. However, the scheme was abandoned in the face of strong public opposition with more than 1.8 million people signing an online petition against the proposal.

The prospect of national road pricing has resurfaced again this year as the Government faces a potential black hole in taxation if the country's vehicle fleet all becomes electric.

In 2018-19, road vehicles raised approximately £40 billion in taxation: 6.3% of total government revenue. This was made up of £28bn in fuel duty, £5.7bn VAT on fuel and £6.5bn in vehicle excise duty. This is equivalent to £1,000 per licensed vehicle per year or 12ppm.

FUNDING BLACK HOLE

The move towards zero emission EVs – hastened by the Government's ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2030 – threatens to create a funding black hole. The Government is proposing no new hybrid models will be sold after 2035.

EVs are currently not subject to any fuel duty or vehicle excise duty (VED). The only tax is VAT on electricity which, for many, is charged at the domestic fuel rate of 5%.

Effectively, if the same vehicle usage rates are assumed, this is equivalent to £60 per year or less than a penny per mile in tax revenue.

"The Treasury knows something has got to change because they will end up with a black hole and I can't see any other option than road pricing," said Merriman.

"We've seen what happened with plastic bags in supermarkets: as soon as you started charging for them, the consumption reduced.

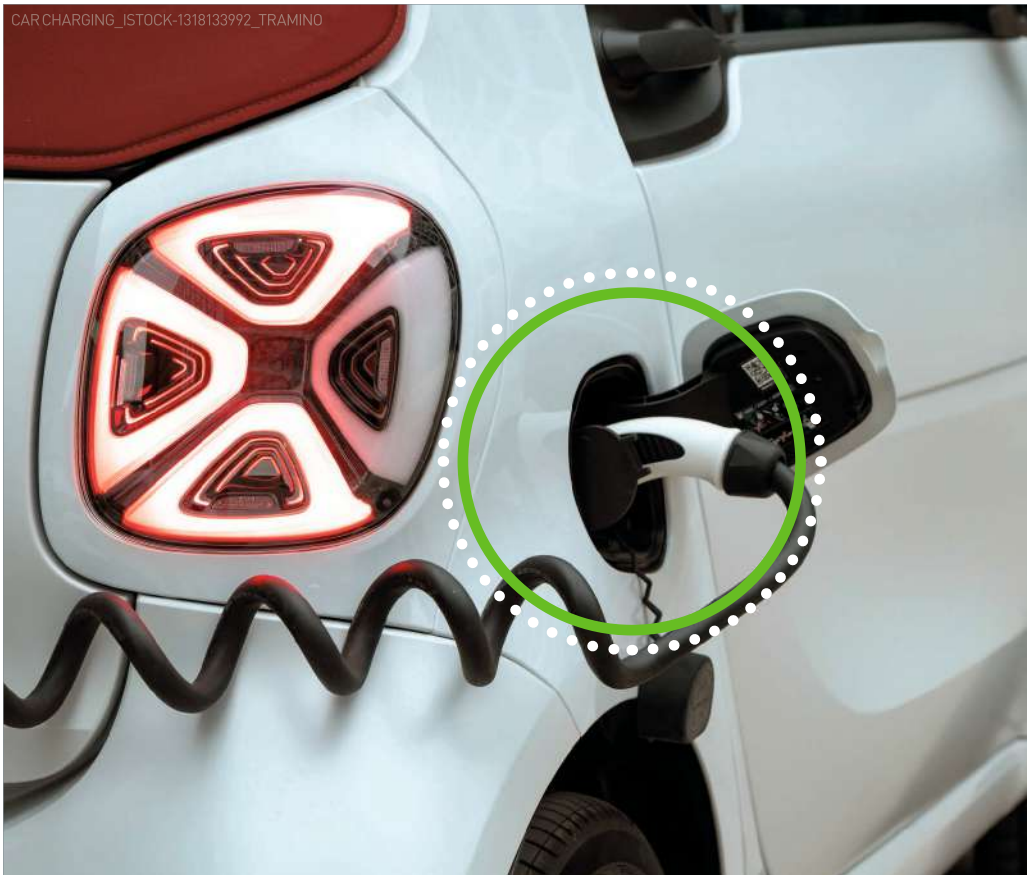
"If we were charging people perhaps a little more directly for the road usage that they take up, then maybe they might use less of it.

"They might switch to alternative forms of transport, public transport or, indeed, more active travel. So it might not just be good for congestion and the environment, but good for health and (reducing) obesity.

"Something is, ultimately, going to have to give, and I think the 2030 ban of the sale of new combustion-engined vehicles is going to be that time when we look at road pricing as well."

In the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the Government suggests 2024-2025 as a "potential date" to introduce a new road vehicle CO₂ emissions regulatory regime. It adds that favourable company car tax rates for zero emission cars will remain "until at least March 2025", which is when the current BIK tax tables run out.

CAR CHARGING_IStock-1318133992_TRAMINO



The Transport Select Committee is carrying out inquiries into both road pricing and the roll-out of zero-emission vehicles, and Merriman added: "The Government is doing a great job of setting these big bang targets, which require the industry to really get going by a certain date.

"But the question is if it's enough just to actually put the big bang approach in place.

"The Government needs to do more to ensure that there are milestones, projects that can be delivered on a year-by-year basis so that we're actually seeing a consistent growth, and not a situation where there is not much going on for a few years, and all of a sudden, huge amounts have to be done."

Merriman's view was shared at the conference, held in June, by Greg Archer, UK director of Europe's biggest non-governmental organisation (NGO) Transport & Environment.

"We need to move forward with a really clear plan," he said. "We have the fundamentals in place. We have a charging network that is growing across the UK with about one charger for about every 20 EVs on the road, which is perfectly

adequate for the number of vehicles we have now.

"National Grid has made it clear there is no overarching barrier in terms of electricity grids and sales of EVs are now more than 10% of the new car market.

"By 2025, vehicle manufacturers have already committed to making around one-fifth of their cars zero emission.

"What we need is to put in place a plan that will get us to the final stage."

Archer said Transport & Environment has identified five key elements for that plan: creating a world-class charging network; setting zero emission targets for major fleets; first year VED reform and attractive benefit-in-kind rates; zero emission vehicle sales targets for car and van makers; and supply chain support.

"For a 2035 phase out [of internal combustion engine – ICE – and hybrid vehicles] we need sales of zero emission vehicles to reach around 17% in 2024, rising to 35% in 2027 and 61% in 2030," he added. "The current UK CO₂ regulations will only require about 13% of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) by 2025, and therefore fall well short of what is needed.

"Just providing carrots for consumers to buy electric vehicles will be very expensive and, ultimately, probably unsuccessful as it is unlikely to be matched with an equivalent increase in supply from manufacturers.

"But equally true is that just regulating the car industry is likely to lead to a shortage of demand in vehicles, and, therefore, a failure to meet goals.

"It is possible to achieve a phase-out of ICE engines by 2035. Now we have to see policy develop to make sure it happens."

“NATIONAL GRID HAS MADE IT CLEAR THERE IS NO OVERARCHING BARRIER IN TERMS OF ELECTRICITY GRIDS AND SALES OF EVs ARE NOW MORE THAN 10% OF THE NEW CAR MARKET”

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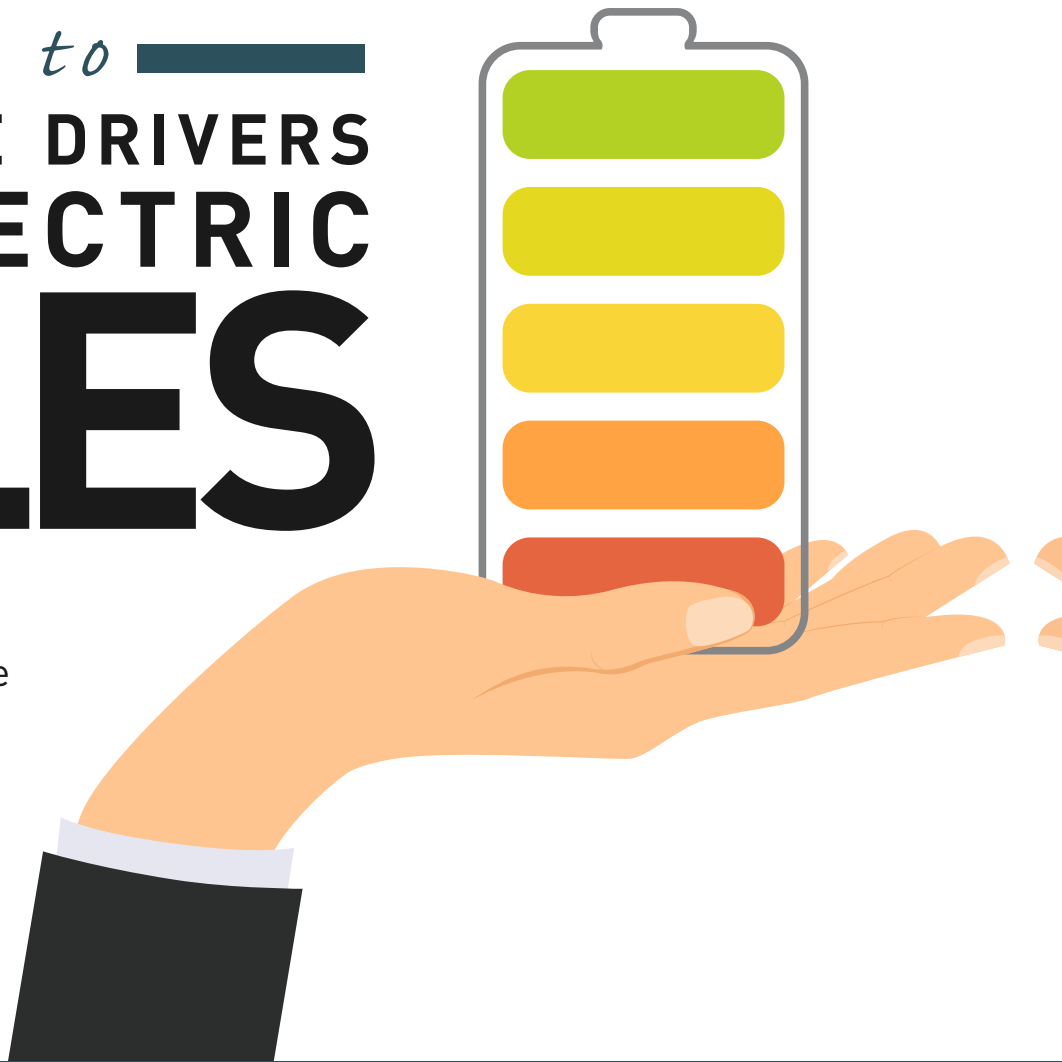
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How to REIMBURSE DRIVERS FOR ELECTRIC MILES

The chasm between the cheapest and most expensive electric vehicle charge point tariffs will force fleets to calculate the true pence per mile cost of electricity.

Jonathan Manning reports



For any fleet manager experienced in the battle to control fuel costs, the prospect of managing recharging expenditure for electric vehicles (EVs) presents a bewildering challenge.

Campaigns to urge drivers to save a penny or two by refuelling at cheaper forecourts appear quaint in the face of the massive divergence between the cheapest and most expensive EV charging available.

To put this into context, imagine a world in which the pump price of a litre of diesel ranged from 13p to well beyond £1.30.

The prospect is unthinkable, yet multiples of this scale are common in the world of EV recharging, where the cost of one kilowatt hour (kWh) of electricity extends from just 4.5p on a specialist domestic energy tariff to 69p per kWh at an Ionity rapid charger, a difference of 1,433%.

"It's important to understand the variability of electricity prices and how that relates to how much vehicles cost to run," says Energy Saving Trust account manager supply chain Ian Featherstone.

Citing the example of a Nissan Leaf charging on a domestic 7kW charger at 5p/kWh, Featherstone says four hours of charge would supply 28kWh, enough to drive 85 miles at 1.6p per mile (ppm).

A daily rapid charge, however, would increase the cost to at least 10ppm.

This highlights the complications arising from the mosaic of charging solutions – home, work-place and public – available to EV drivers.

In an ideal world, fleets would direct drivers to plug in their vehicles at home overnight, maximising the opportunity to recharge batteries at the very lowest cost.

This is not without its issues, however, with drivers anxious about how they will be reimbursed for the extra electricity that appears on their

domestic energy bills, and fleet systems forced to contend with inputting accurate information from myriad home energy tariffs, which drivers are liable to change for a better deal.

But solutions do exist.

Mina, for example, has developed a system that fits neatly between the domestic charge point and the energy supplier.

The driver continues to pay the bill for household electricity, but Mina pays the energy supplier directly for all the power used to recharge a company vehicle.

Mina then consolidates these individual household payments into a single, consolidated VAT invoice for the fleet (which can choose to pass the cost of private mileages back to drivers).

The technology avoids two common problems associated with drivers charging at home.

Firstly, 'bill shock', which arises from drivers being reimbursed for electric miles long before the energy supplier reflects this increased demand in its bills.

A driver could easily overlook (and spend) the extra £50 to £100 per month paid into their account as reimbursement for business trips, only to face a bill of £1,000 at the end of the year from their energy supplier.

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SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Joshua Gordon,
EV strategy manager, Geotab



Electric vehicles (EVs) continue to take hold of the UK market, despite supply chain challenges on vehicle lead times. Data from the Society for Motor

Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) shows battery-electric vehicles are up more than 50% year-to-date, with plug-in hybrids and battery-electric vehicles (BEVs) accounting for close to 14% of new vehicle sales, up more than 10% year-on-year.

For company vehicle drivers, the introduction of salary sacrifice is a game-changer. Acquiring an EV under salary sacrifice offers a couple of key advantages to drivers over regular leasing. One, lease payments are made on gross salary before national insurance and tax contributions. Two, EVs attract preferential rates in benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax, 1% this financial year for BEVs. The industry is acting and many businesses are now offering the scheme to employees.

One of the most prominent challenges to EV adoption is understanding where and when to charge. Charging at home is a growing trend where access to off-street parking is available. A recent survey highlights that a third of UK businesses plan to install charge points at drivers' homes. Financially, this is a win-win as charge point hardware expenditure can be less intensive. Also, the cost per kWh at home is often the most economical.

But, not every vehicle can charge at home. Data helps bring forward the charging strategies that are right for your business when making the first steps to electrification.

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Secondly, if drivers are not sure how they will be reimbursed for domestic electricity, they are more likely to use a higher cost public charge point that provides them with a clear receipt for their expenses, says Mina founder Ashley Tate.

"We have seen that already in the hybrid world where we've spoken to drivers who say they won't plug it in at home because they're asking 'how am I getting paid for this?'," he adds.

"They'd rather just fill up with petrol or diesel, even though, overall, it's probably better for them to charge it."

Unfortunately, home charging is not an option for a large cohort of EV drivers.

Data from the English Housing Survey 2018, compiled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, revealed that only 66.6% of dwellings (including flats) have either a garage or off-road parking, where a charger might potentially be installed, although a more detailed study by net zero data analytics consultancy Field Dynamics found that the true figure is considerably lower.

"50% of your fleet will not be able to charge at home, so start planning for that now," says Field Dynamics managing director Ben Allan.

This forces fleets to provide drivers with

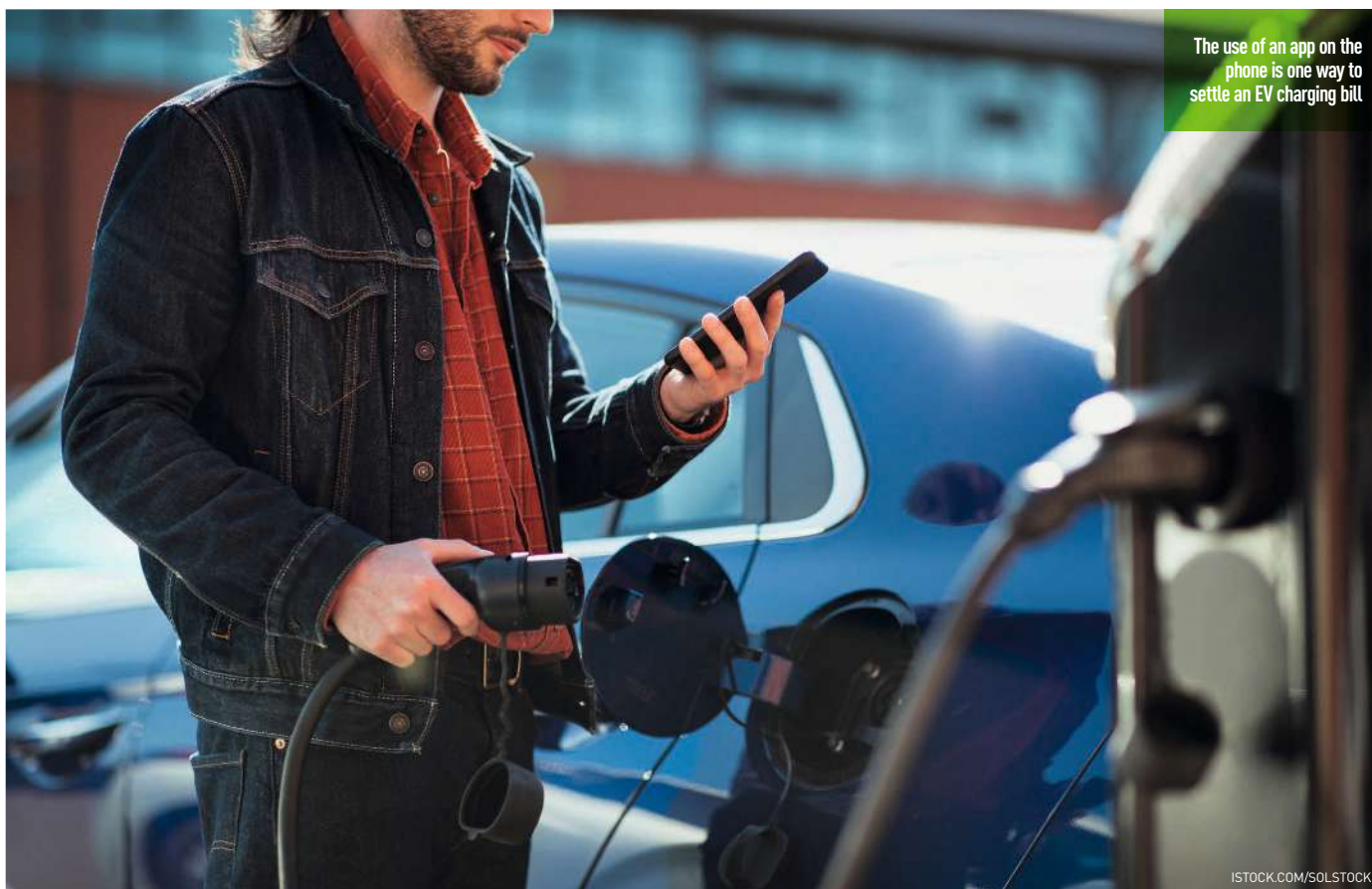
access to workplace chargers or public charging networks, and to accept (in the short term at least) that operational necessity will trump tight cost control in terms of where drivers plug in their vehicles, says Fleetcor managing director, UK fuel Paul Holland.

"At the moment there is a broad mandate to get a certain percentage of a fleet converted to EVs by a certain deadline, so, operationally, you just have to find a way to do it," he adds.

"But the more mature adopters are much more focused on cost, and when you've got the difference between paying 5p or 50p per kWh, the difference is big enough to focus the mind."

It's a complex task to optimise charging at lower cost locations while satisfying the operational business requirements, adds Holland, who says that, in the longer term, fleets will require the same controls and processes for EV recharging as fuel cards currently provide for fossil-fuelled vehicles: fleet discounts, a simple process for claiming back VAT and comparative costs transparency.

"We are seeing a very strong appetite for consolidating information around vehicle fuel purchases and EV charging, and there is a definite aspiration for people to get as ➔



The use of an app on the phone is one way to settle an EV charging bill

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comprehensive management information as they're able to have," he says.

Delivering this data on a national basis is not currently possible due to the fragmentation of the public recharging market, with multiple networks each running their own access and payment mechanisms.

The Government's insistence that fast chargers along the strategic road network must accept contactless payment has provided a solution for private drivers, and Holland forecasts market consolidation as charge point operators understand and appreciate fleets' need for interoperability, consolidating spend across several networks into a single invoice, and backing it up with the management information that fleets require to analyse their recharging expenditure.

Rewind a few decades and petrol and diesel fuel cards found themselves in a similar scenario, before establishing national coverage.

A handful of EV charging payment cards, some using radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology or major credit card networks, are already offering company car and van drivers access to several different charging networks.

The AllStar One Electric card, for example, is accepted across 10 recharging networks, providing a payment mechanism for both internal combustion engine and EVs, supported by richer data than is typically available from credit cards tapped on a contactless charger.

"You are getting level three data, which gives you the unit price, as well as the amount of power you are taking and the kilowatts per hour that each individual vehicle is taking," says Holland.



**THE CURRENT
AER RATE AND THE
PROCESS FOR
DETERMINING IT
ARE NOT FIT-FOR-
PURPOSE. IT HAS
THE POTENTIAL TO
COMPROMISE THE
UPTAKE OF EVs**

GERRY KEANEY, BVRLA

"You gain added insight, which enables you to develop a much more bespoke charging pattern for your fleet."

This type of data is essential if fleets are to find a fairer solution for reimbursing drivers for electric business miles than HMRC's Advisory Electricity Rate (AER) of 4ppm.

The simplicity of using the AER to reimburse drivers is attractive, but there's compelling evidence that it leaves drivers out of pocket, especially those who rely on public chargers.

The original rate has not risen since it was introduced in 2018 when it was based on the lowest cost domestic energy tariffs and first generation EVs; it is now subject to a fleet industry campaign for an overhaul.

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) and British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) have joined forces to call on HMRC to review the AER on a regular basis to reflect real-world EV charging costs (as an aside, HMRC's AFR for petrol and diesel prices are reviewed quarterly, and differentiated by three engine sizes).

BVRLA chief executive Gerry Keane says: "The current AER rate and the process for determining it are not fit-for-purpose."

"It has the potential to compromise the uptake of EVs, as employees will not, in many cases, be adequately reimbursed for their business travel costs."

Figures from fuel management specialist TMC reveal the scale of the problem.

In real-world driving conditions, only eight of 34 electric cars and one of 18 electric vans operate at 4ppm, even if they charge exclusively at home. ➔



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❏ If public charging is used to recharge the batteries just 25% of the time, only the tiny Renault Twizy costs 4ppm or less in electricity, while the cheapest van costs twice the official AER.

Looking ahead, the discrepancy between the AER and the true pence per mile cost of electricity is only going to widen.

The new generation of EVs, whose heavy battery packs support longer ranges, return poorer miles per kWh figures than first wave electric cars, such as the Nissan Leaf, on which the AER was based.

Plus, energy prices are set to rise over the next decade as electric heating systems replace gas boilers and push up power consumption.

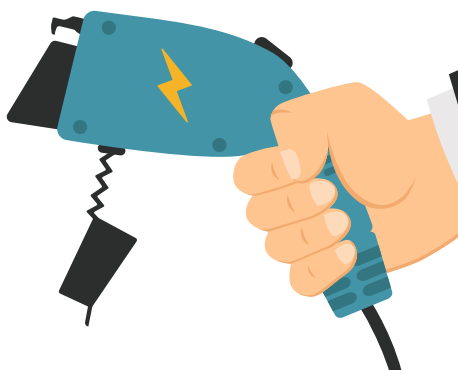
The inescapable conclusion is that employers who use the official AER to reimburse their drivers for business miles are, effectively, asking those drivers to subsidise the true cost of the electricity.

The problem has yet to become acute because the euphoria of almost zero company car tax on zero emission cars has persuaded employees to overlook the fact that they are marginally out of pocket on mileage reimbursement, but this will not last.

"Company car drivers are happy at the moment because they're paying next to nothing in benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax, but they're going to realise that the (public charging) numbers don't stack up for them," says M Group Services head of fleet Matthew Hammond.

"It's an issue that's coming down the road and we need to address it," he adds.

Few commentators believe that BIK tax will remain at negligible levels once the Government



COMPANY CAR
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MATTHEW HAMMOND, M GROUP

has successfully promoted mass adoption of EVs.

The issue will become even more acute for drivers unable to install a charger at home and take advantage of the cheapest energy costs.

As a result, fleets will come under mounting pressure to reimburse drivers much more generously for business miles than the AER unless HMRC increases the rate significantly.

The fairest solution is to reimburse drivers for the actual cost of electricity used, consolidating home and public charging expenditure, says AFP chair and TMC managing director Paul Hollick.

"To do this, businesses need to take into account the different costs of charging at home, office, kerbside and public charge points," he says.

The first step is to work out how much energy a vehicle consumes per mile, which gives a kWh/mile figure.

"The rate used to reimburse electric vehicle drivers can be a blended rate of home and public charging, taking any charging using company charge points into account (otherwise drivers might submit a mileage expense claim for this free electricity)," he says.

TMC has application programming interfaces (APIs) set up with providers like EO and Podpoint to take in office and home charging data, along with feeds from charge card providers, as well as its own charge card that can be used at any charge point that accepts Mastercard or Visa.

"Our aim is to make electric vehicle reimbursement simple and fair for both the business and EV drivers," says Hollick.

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MOVING AWAY FROM GREY FLEET

Is it time for companies to dip a figurative toe in the shared vehicle pool?, asks *Victor Lejona*

Grey fleet is defined as the personal vehicles owned by employees of a company when they are used for business purposes. It often presents organisations with challenges when it comes to:

■ **Appropriate use:** Grey fleet sometimes presents an easy option for employees, where other modes of transport (active travel, public transport, pool vehicles) can be more economically viable and have lower emissions.

■ **Expense:** Typical mileage claim rates for grey fleet are around 45p per mile. Introduction of challenge mechanisms such as regular mileage claim audits or telemetry often reduce claims by up to 30%. Moving away from grey fleet to pool car use increases fleet management overhead but offers strong cost and control performance.

■ **Safety and compliance:** An organisation has a duty of care for employees during working hours. This means the employer is responsible for ensuring its grey fleet drivers are eligible to drive in the UK and their personal vehicles are in road-worthy condition (tyres, brakes, lights, etc.).

■ **Emissions:** While company cars and pool cars are often replaced on a frequent basis (and hence adhere to modern emission standards), employees' personal vehicles are often older and more polluting.

As a result of these issues, many companies want to control grey fleet through interventions such as staff travel hierarchies, use of car clubs and/or pool vehicles, promotion of web-conferencing and home-working, non-travel days, or even the ban of grey fleet vehicle use.

However, removing grey fleet is not an easy task, and organisations need to implement a smooth transition process when moving away from it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Victor Lejona is a mechanical engineer with six years' experience at Cenex in sustainable transport consultancy and research, committed to helping public and private entities shift to green mobility. He is technical lead and project manager for multiple Innovate UK and EU-funded programmes, as well as innovative consultancy projects for private clients and public authorities.

First, in the case of pool cars, companies need to work out the number of pool vehicles and charging infrastructure required, as well as their ideal location. To this end, grey mileage claim data needs to be analysed appropriately to estimate the optimum number of pool vehicles to ensure a high utilisation and a positive business case.

The pandemic has provoked an increase of remote working and web-conferencing and this needs to be considered: a reduction in business mileage compared with pre-pandemic levels is

highly likely. In a similar way, the placement of pool vehicles closer to employees' homes rather than at a company's offices/depots is also advisable for higher convenience, hence increasing the usage of the vehicles.

Moreover, it is a significant behavioural change for employees to switch from the convenience of using their own cars to booking a pool vehicle to which they are not used to, more so in the case of electric vehicles (EVs).

Therefore, it is crucial to engage with staff from the outset to listen to their concerns and make sure they understand the benefits of a pool vehicle system. This process takes many forms: regular internal communications, peer champions' experiences, pool fleet promotional/training sessions, locating the pool vehicles in 'prime' parking spots, or involving senior management and also users who are more public-facing.

Having a clear travel hierarchy helps with pool vehicle acceptance too. This is usually presented as a decision tree that guides the employees to the preferred mode of transport dependent on several factors, such as the importance of the trip, distance, duration of the meeting or number of passengers.

It is key to include the pool vehicles in the travel hierarchy in a way their use is maximised, e.g. discouraging the use of pool vehicles for short trips to long meetings. Another way of maximising the use of pool vehicles is to open them up to the general public in a similar way to a car club, either just out of working hours or even 24/7 if the fleet is large enough. It is also important to leave grey mileage as a last option in the travel hierarchies, prioritising the use of public transport if possible when a pool car is not available.

HAVING A CLEAR TRAVEL HIERARCHY HELPS WITH POOL VEHICLE ACCEPTANCE

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Some of the UK's most forward-thinking fleets have helped put together two days of best practice and strategy sessions on October 5-6 that tackle the most pressing issues facing fleet, HR and finance professionals.

This year's show is back in person at the NEC in Birmingham and delegates will gain access to more than 20 sessions and speakers with thought-provoking and useful insights across the Operational Excellence and Strategy Theatres.

Speakers at the seminars will be experts in their fields, either hands-on fleet managers or representatives of specialist industry bodies and organisations. There will be no sales pitches.

The Operational Excellence Theatre will deliver 'how to' sessions with simple top tips and best practice advice that fleet professionals and business owners can take away and put into practice the next day.

This covers the fleet essentials such as driver training and telematics, but also looks at the best way to make a case for the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and how to successfully operate them to the benefit of your fleet.

The Strategy Theatre sessions focus on looking further ahead into the future of how fleet and mobility will change in the coming years.

This includes looking at planning for what energy needs fleets will require as greater proportions of vehicles make the switch to zero emissions, the future of taxation, autonomous and connected technology, as well as how the Government's plans to transform the UK road network will impact moving goods and people.

There will also be special Benefits Box seminar sessions aimed at fleet, HR and finance managers who are new to the industry or have recently been given responsibility for fleet and mobility.

A Local Authority Hub, putting local authority decision-makers face to face with their local fleet constituents, is also new for this year.

The following topics (see facing page) have been put together by the event's Visitor Advisory Board. For more information on all the seminar sessions, visit fleetandmobilitylive.com.

October 5-6, 2021, at the NEC



From the 2019 show

VISITING THE SHOW SAFELY

The health of all stakeholders is paramount to Fleet & Mobility Live and the show's parent company Bauer Media.

Coronavirus is constantly evolving, so the team behind the show is closely monitoring the situation and all official Government advice will be followed.

Mindful of Fleet & Mobility Live's duty of care, the event's organisers are consulting with experts about appropriate sanitary and health measures and can assure that all appropriate precautionary steps will be taken to match guidance at the time of the live event.

Fleet News has already successfully held Company Car in Action and the Fleet News

Awards in June and July this year, both of which were in-person shows on location. They both included involvement from local authorities to ensure necessary steps were in place.

All seminar sessions will have enhanced cleaning of all public areas, socially distanced seating (if still required), and there will be ample sanitiser stations and every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of all those in attendance.

This will be reviewed between now and the event to reflect any subsequent Government announcements.

Visit: <https://www.fleetandmobilitylive.com/covid-19-updates>



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE SESSIONS

Driver training and risk management: Creating a post-Covid plan

An essential best practice session on driver training looking at risk assessments, the role of online learning, driver passports and the challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. How has technology changed the way fleets can approach driver training?

Beyond telematics: User experiences

How fleets can pull together all types of vehicle management data, how to make sure the suite of capabilities is being used to its fullest potential and how fleets can use this to better manage mobility in the future.

Optimisation and utilisation: Managing downtime, embracing uptime

The best way to run an efficient fleet is evolving, with careful route optimisation, high vehicle utilisation and access to actionable data all essential tools. An expert fleet case study will explore the challenges to keeping vehicles on the road brought by Covid-19, as well as how preventative maintenance can transform a fleet's vehicle uptime.

Driver and staff recruitment and retention

Attracting professional drivers, training them and keeping them is a challenge for all fleets in the UK. Industry experts share their best practice tips on driver recruitment, the challenges facing the industry as a result of Brexit, as well as the progress being made to make the profession more diverse and inclusive.

Managing drivers and staff: Changing role of the fleet decision-maker

Mental health problems have been exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic both from staff feeling isolated working from home, but also fears about the disease itself. Fleet managers need to make sure they have the ability to offer the right kind of one-to-one support and make sure driver well-being forms an integral part of their driver policy.

How to implement an eMobility strategy

This best practice clinic will give a grounding on how best to identify how to transition a vehicle fleet to EV, what to expect with how it may impact operations and all the infrastructure and data insights that can help make a success of the switch.

Making the business case for electric vehicles

An expert who has already made significant progress with transitioning to electric will explain how to make the costs stack up for investing in EVs and how to present to directors to get the green light for switching.

Establishing a robust EV workplace charging infrastructure

This clinic will offer guidance on understanding a fleet's charging infrastructure requirements at work and depots, including AC, DC charger investment, preparing for groundworks/upgrades and how taking the right steps to manage charging can help minimise costs.

STRATEGY SESSIONS

Future energy needs for your electric fleet

This session will look at the future energy scenarios and the national and local network infrastructure needed to power the latest electric fleets. Experts will set the scene on the UK's current energy plans to cope with mass adoption of EVs and what fleets should be considering.

Managing a safe and efficient road network

A holistic view of the UK's EV infrastructure, smart motorways, congestion, road safety and the key objectives from the Government's Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2). Where the biggest impacts will be seen from the £27.4 billion to be spent over the next four years.

Transport decarbonisation policy: what does it mean for fleets?

An in-depth look at how the policies suggested in the Department for Transport's (DfT) Transport Decarbonisation Plan will impact fleets. This will provide the direction of travel for charging infrastructure plans, new subsidies, as well as hydrogen investment for HGVs.

The future of tax and incentives

The switch to EVs will leave a hole in Government coffers so there will have to be a change in strategy. Tax experts will help break down the latest on benefit-in-kind (BIK) company car tax, what support is available through super deduction tax breaks, as well as savings to be made through plug-in vehicle incentives, VAT and reimbursements and the potential changes with road charging.

Mobility as a solution: a new strategy for getting people from A to B

How is the fleet manager's role continuing to change to encompass all mobility, beyond cars and vans? This session will look at how some of the most forward thinking companies are approaching mobility credits, classifying essential and non-essential travel and creating mobility packages to best suit company operations and employee needs.

Alternative fuels: a long-term view for vans and trucks

Hydrogen and biomethane technologies could be the answer to help companies switch away from diesel, but the costs are high and the infrastructure is lagging behind. This session will provide a road map of the UK's alternative fuel infrastructure.

Autonomy and autonomous technology

The Government will legalise "self-driving" driver assistance systems before the end of 2021. But what do the changes to autonomous lane-keeping systems (ALKS) rules mean for fleets and what is the path forward as technologies continue to outstrip legislation?

How connected cars can benefit your fleet

Breaking down the potential benefits of vehicle-to-vehicle, vehicle-to-everything and vehicle-to-infrastructure technologies and what's next.

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'Fewer, friendlier, cheaper miles' is the Asda mantra

Logistics director Chris Hall reveals the roadmap to an efficient fleet. *Stephen Briers* reports



Efficiency is the watchword at Asda Stores Ltd, under the banner of 'fewer, friendlier, cheaper miles', as the super-market chain moves to a centralised planning structure, trials alternative fuel options and focuses on boosting utilisation and efficiency levels.

Huge gains have come from a proactive preventative maintenance programme which, aligned to strong third-party relationships and simply "doing the basics well", has helped to more than halve Asda's vehicle off-road (VOR) percentage to less than 5% across its 3,100-strong van fleet.

The business separates its leasing and maintenance contracts, using Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions for funding and Mercedes-Benz, Ford and Iveco for contract-backed repair and maintenance services. With Zenith co-ordinating the overall aftersales services across the majority of the fleet, this gives the best value and performance, with suppliers who can focus their concentration on meeting Asda's needs.

RIGHT SKILL SET

Chris Hall, Asda Logistics Services (ALS) senior director – central logistics, explains: "It's one thing providing the funding for the vehicle across its life but it's another having the right skill set to maintain it. We've found that you don't necessarily get the best deal if you try to do a one-stop shop."

The key-partner approach results in a competitive leasing rate and the controls and processes to ensure fewer breakdowns and faster repairs. Asda points to Zenith's software and data analysis which facilitate preventative maintenance, complemented by its solutions for reactive maintenance.

"It's a different skill set to a transactional

leasing offer," Hall adds. "We've not found anyone that can provide both really well."

ALS also runs a fleet of almost 1,000 tractor units and more than 3,000 trailers, of which a third are temperature-controlled. Premium brands Scania and Volvo, Asda's long-time partners, maintain the trucks via their dealer networks.

The location of their sites closely mirrors Asda's distribution centres, offering an end-to-end fleet solution.

"Maintaining 1,000 tractors and 3,000 trailers across 24 depots with logistics and distribution managers at those sites is much easier than trying to manage 3,100 vans spread across 300 stores where the skill sets and training are diverse – it's a very different dynamic," Hall says.

For ALS's logistics fleet, improvements in the VOR performance continue. Buying the right trucks, supported by Scania and Volvo, has been key. Success has also been underpinned by the use of health check software, which monitors brakes, tyres and axle weights. The data enables the company to be more proactive in tackling potential issues.

"We don't differentiate between the fleets. The vans are maintained to the same standards as the O-Licensed truck fleet and we stringently adhere to the same programme for both," Hall says.

"The challenge, of course, is we have our systems, the shops have their own systems, Zenith has its systems and the garage networks have systems, and they are not necessarily integrated. That's a problem for the industry, not just our problem. There's an opportunity going forward to join the dots across all this data."

Over the past decade, Asda has taken strides towards implementing a national, centralised planning programme designed to boost efficiency and utilisation of its operations, which makes 17,000 deliveries a week to a network of almost 650 shops. The process started with a move from localised planning, where each depot had its own transport plan, to regional which gave an immediate improvement in

efficiency and fleet utilisation.

Hall draws on the example of Yorkshire, where Asda has two ambient depots and a chilled depot. Their activities now sit on one plan with an open window agreement with the retail shops, enabling the fleet to use every hour of the day.

"Up until about five years ago, we had very specific one-hour delivery windows for every load. This wasn't optimal," Hall says. "We now have a much larger delivery window, so we are able to maximise efficiencies in our day-to-day planning."

As fresh deliveries are typically made through the night and ambient during the day, the regional plan enables the transfer of vehicles between sites to eliminate surplus capacity. Overall utilisation and mileage of the fleet is now much higher with each vehicle travelling approximately 500,000 miles over its four-year lifecycle. That sits against a backdrop of network alignment, bringing depots closer to stores, which has seen Asda's average stem miles (distance to/from depot to store) reduce to less than 90 miles. A decade ago, it was 110-115 miles.

"These are short shunts now, not long journeys of 12-13 hours a day travelling to one customer," Hall says. "Typically, our drivers now do two or three journeys in a day."

SAME VOLUME, FEWER LOADS

This initiative has been supported by the introduction of double-deck trailers which deliver the same volume with fewer loads and, therefore, fewer miles.

"This is all part of our strategy of 'fewer, friendlier, cheaper miles'," Hall adds. "That's our mantra – drive down the amount of deliveries and then make the ones we do more efficient."

The next step, to be delivered later this year, will see Asda go from eight regional planning sites to one national planning hub in the Midlands.

"That will be where we plan transport routing and scheduling for 17,000 deliveries a week, all of the inter-trunk movement between the sites and all of the collections of our parcel deliveries," Hall says.

"Standardising and centralising has been a key theme for us. This move will be a major piece of change."

A key benefit of a national structure is the ability to integrate primary and secondary logistics planning. At present, each of the eight regional offices schedule their own depot-to-store deliveries with six third-party providers doing their own planning, resulting in 14 plans. Managed centrally, this will become one consolidated plan.

One outcome will be a reduction in empty running. Almost half of truck deliveries return to base with reverse logistics, such as pallets, cages, general waste and recycling but this still means 50% of Asda's 17,000 weekly journeys are coming back empty. And the same is true for its primary partners.

Hall wants to sew the two networks together and use the collective leverage of the ALS fleet and the third-party fleet. ➔



SPOTLIGHT: ASDA STORES LTD

“I see a future where we have more of our primary inbound hauliers taking shop deliveries out for us after they have delivered into our depots; but also some of our own fleet delivering primary inbound off the back of shops,” he says. “We do some of this now, but because they are on different plans, it’s disconnected. That’s where we see the biggest opportunity for efficiencies.”

Sustainability is a core Asda value – its first target was launched in 2005 with its initial carbon footprint report published six years later – and the fleet has an important part to play in ensuring the company achieves its goal of halving its greenhouse gases by 2025.

Latest diesel technology has improved efficiencies, but Asda is now embarking on an “aggressive change” from diesel to gas. More than half of the 1,000 tractor units will be run on liquefied natural gas (LNG) by the end of next year, with a complete switch expected during 2024.

“The tractor units are more expensive, but the overall fuel saving is significant. And the sustainability agenda is important for the business,” says Hall.

Asda has 312 gas trucks producing 80% fewer emissions than the diesel equivalents. They are forecast to save the company close to £1 million this year.

“It’s not insignificant, even though it’s still relatively new technology. The reliability is good (a key factor in Asda’s full-life cost calculations), the drivers like them – which is always important – and they are saving money,” Hall says.

FUELLING INFRASTRUCTURE

The main challenge, albeit more at an industry level, is the lack of LNG fuelling infrastructure, although Asda is investing in its own gas filling stations.

For trucks, Hall believes gas is the most obvious stepping-stone to electric. His ex-colleagues at WalMart (Asda’s former parent) in America are reporting successful trials on electric trucks, but he doesn’t expect to see viable models in the UK for the next few years.

“We have also looked at hydrogen, but it doesn’t appear to have a business case that stacks up – at the moment, the only game in town if you want to come away from diesel is gas,” Hall adds.

“I think it’s diesel to gas, gas to electric – probably within the next 10 years – and then, a slightly different turn, electric to autonomous – but I’ll probably be retired by then!”

Quicker progress will be made on electric vans, although just a handful of manufacturers currently offer the right options for Asda’s Online business. There are also infrastructure considerations here, although ALS is already looking at installing charge points at some depots to accommodate fridge trailers, rather than run them on red diesel.

“Doing this across the best part of 300 sites becomes a huge undertaking to get that infrastructure right,” Hall says.

“But we’ve got to start somewhere, and I



Chris Hall has been part of the Asda team for 23 years, taking up his new role within the past five

COMPANY: Asda Stores Ltd
SENIOR DIRECTOR – CENTRAL LOGISTICS: Chris Hall
TIME IN ROLE: 4½ years
FLEET SIZE: 7,100: vans – 3,100; trucks – 1,000 tractor units; trailers – 3,000
FUNDING: contract hire (trailers on spot hire)
OPERATING CYCLE: vans – four-five years; trucks – four years; trailers five-eight years
BRANDS: vans – Iveco, Mercedes-Benz; trucks: Scania, Volvo

see the next six-12 months being about proof of concept, does it stack up and what are the unintended consequences of what we are doing – we'll do all of that. But if it's as successful as gas on heavy fleet then we will get the backing to spend the cash."

Hall has been part of the Asda logistics team for 23 years, joining the business as a transport manager. During that time, he has retained fleet within his job description and is now responsible for specification, procurement and maintenance of the vans and trucks, planning and forecasting volumes across the network, and the transport operating model, including the structure and processes both centrally and in the depots.

"Fleet follows you around as a career – you become the subject matter expert for transport, although in the past five years the role has widened significantly," he says.

'COLLECT' SERVICE

His broad remit also includes managing the global imports operation, contract management of Asda's nine recycling centres, distribution of fuel to its filling stations and the 'collect' service – a commercial offering to suppliers to transport their goods from point of manufacture to the depot network. It's another revenue stream.

"We are the middleman between our depots and our supply team so, when it comes to volume forecasting and activity planning, we do all of that within our team and cascade the key forecasts out to the depots," Hall says.

"In the past couple of years, we have started to rent out any spare capacity we have in our warehouses with our own suppliers or organisations that have nothing to do with our business – we have 70,000 pallet spaces that are being rented out –

which gives us profitable revenue."

Like many of its counterparts, Asda has seen a huge surge in demand for online shopping during the Covid pandemic. Consequently, its fleet of 3.5-tonne home delivery vans is set for rapid expansion this year, from 3,100 to 3,500 and potentially reaching 3,800 by the end of 2022.

When Hall brought responsibility for the vans into his team seven years ago, the van fleet numbered just 1,400. However, while he procures the vans, the day-to-operations and profit and loss are the responsibility of the online grocery team.

Rapid fleet growth and the employment of new drivers reinforces the need for robust safety and risk management processes.

Every driver is given a range of training, with the annual Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) used for truck drivers. ALS is extending the use of its hand-held personal digital assistants (PDAs) to include vehicle checks as it assesses ways in which technology can improve compliance.

Telematics in vans and trucks measures driving behaviour, complemented by cameras, but it's almost a full-time job to monitor every incident and near miss, particularly with a heavy fleet travelling 50 million miles a year and a van fleet 30 million, often in riskier built-up areas.

"We have a level of visibility we've never had before which is good for us to be able to investigate incidents," Hall says.

"We're able to identify where we might have high risk drivers and take pre-emptive action, while we also work with Logistics UK on fleet and process audits."

Together with the national planning project, greater utilisation and introduction of alternatives fuels, Asda's risk policy is another pillar to ensure the fleet achieves the goal of fewer, friendlier, cheaper miles.

HALL ON...

... vehicle lead times 'most challenging'

Global production shutdowns caused by the Covid pandemic and the emerging semiconductor supply shortage is putting pressure on organisations across the industry.

For Asda Stores Ltd, the challenge is how to manage the situation against a backdrop of rapid growth in its home delivery fleet.

"It's probably the most challenging I've seen in the 30 years I've been in logistics," says Chris Hall. "Whether it's 3.5-tonne vans, 7.5-tonne trucks or 44-tonne artics, the lead time for fleet has gone out massively."

INNOVATION MORE DIFFICULT

That lack of consistent predictability makes innovating more difficult, delaying plans for proofs of concept on electric vans.

"The pipeline of supply has dried up with the production shutdowns, and it's hand-to-mouth. But that's manageable," Hall adds.

"What will tip things over the edge is the semiconductor issue. That's a real risk to us."

Typically, the lead time for both vans and trucks is 12-20 weeks; those times have now doubled. While ASL attempted to offset the problem by securing capital approval for vehicle replacements earlier in the year, it is now considering placing orders for vehicles scheduled to arrive at the back end of 2022, this year.

"I don't see this problem going away any time soon," Hall says.

A MORE DIVERSE TEAM 'GETS YOU BETTER RESULTS'

Diversity and inclusivity are "massively important" to Asda, according to Chris Hall.

The company is a sponsor at the Amazon Everywoman Transport & Logistics Awards* and puts huge emphasis on having wide representation within its teams.

"Fleet for many years has had a reputation for being middle-aged men, but the reality is we do have a good level of diversity within the team," says Hall. "It's not as high as I would like it but across the function, we are seeing a significant increase in diversity, around age and gender."

He adds: "We get different perspectives by having people from different backgrounds working together and that's important because every day we come across a new challenge, and the ability to get to the right, well rounded answer depends on the people around you. Having a more diverse team gets you better results."

Three of his eight reports are female which was "unheard of" 10 years ago. Involvement in the Everywoman Awards has raised Asda's profile and helped to bring more people from diverse backgrounds into logistics.

"There has been a corporate push to ensure that everything around diversity of thought is enacted within the teams," Hall adds.

"Whenever we are recruiting, the best person should get the job, but we need to pick from a wider pool around gender, ethnicity and all our inclusion values. We are doing a better job of that."

* Asda sponsors the Industry Champion Award at the 2021 Amazon Everywoman in Transport & Logistics Awards. For more information and to find out this year's winners, fleetnews.co.uk/Everywoman2021



FleetNews



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And that's just the start.

Our commitment to innovation does not start and end at the roadside. We are continuously striving to satisfy and anticipate customer requirements.

More than three years ago we launched 'Smart Breakdown' services to our members which has helped us gain invaluable insights into in-car diagnostics, translating raw data into predictive and preventative measures that will benefit all our customers, including those involved in running vehicle fleets.

Combined with investment in customer support services for electric vehicle charge post providers, this means that the AA has a unique platform from which to explore and spearhead future mobility solutions in this rapidly changing and high energy environment.

The AA looks towards a new horizon with its latest research report

**By Gavin Franks,
Business Services Director at the AA**

Innovation is at the heart of the automotive landscape. From vehicle design and powertrain development, to the infrastructure and service economy which supports them, it underpins many of the trends we're currently experiencing.

However, in addition to environmental legislation, Brexit and the impacts of Covid-19, a new wave of technological developments are seemingly reshaping the industry.

This is set to have a profound impact on fleet management and those organisations which rely on vehicles to keep their business moving.

Towards the end of last year we conducted research into electric vehicles (EVs) and alternative fuels, customer service and innovation, and, after gathering our findings, we launched our report 'New Horizons 2021: Technology, customer service and the evolving automotive landscape'.

Exploring the readiness to innovate and barriers to change, our report suggests

that, as we look beyond 2021, there's plenty to be optimistic about. While there's work to be done around education, the rapid adoption of EVs, investment in charging infrastructure and the discussions and funding for UK gigafactories are steps in the right direction.

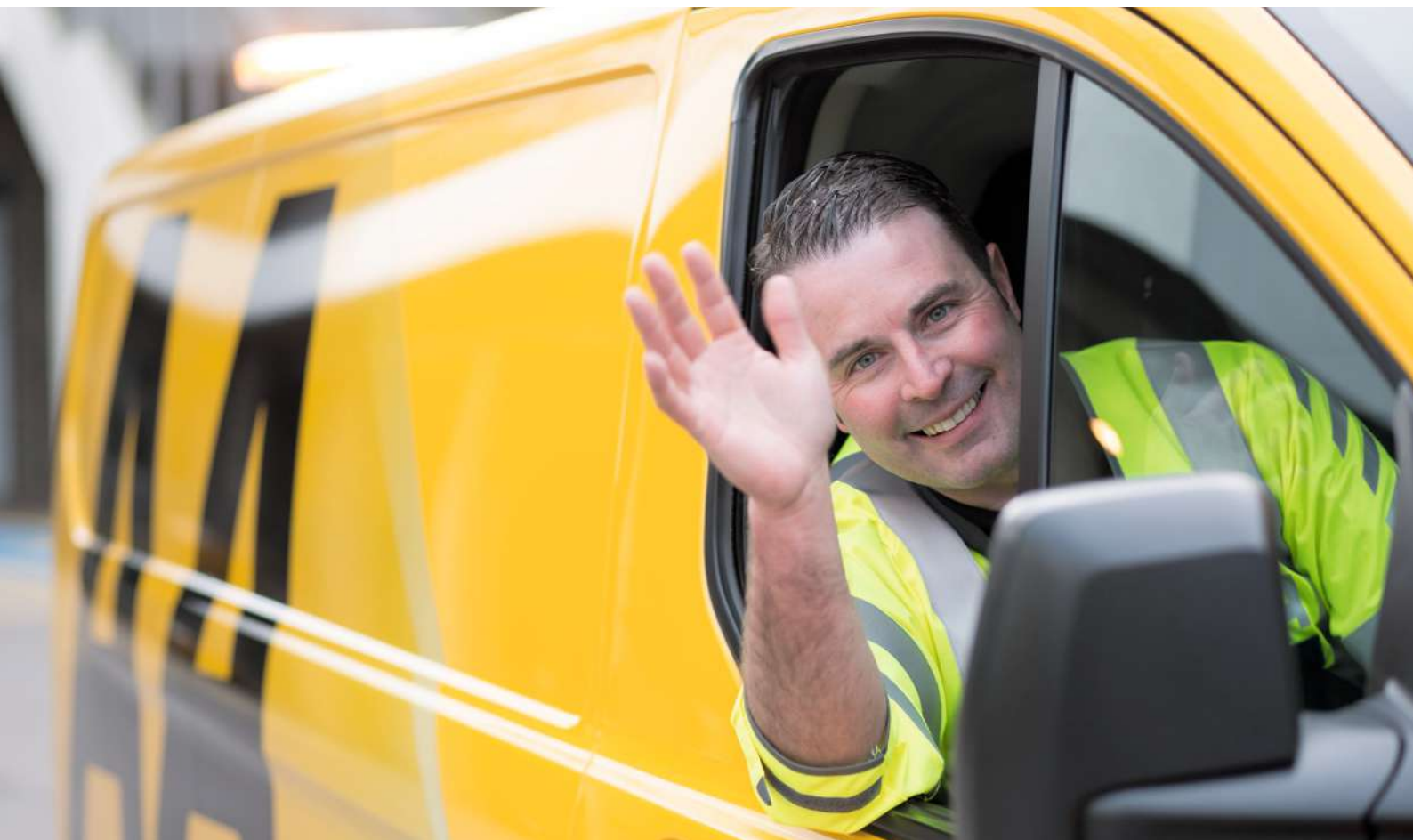
Based on the findings from our report, we've developed a number of key conclusions that will support your fleet now and in the future. This will enable the sector to respond positively to the opportunities, ensure meaningful environmental change and, effectively, futureproof our businesses.

Attitudes are changing

In the UK, opinions towards electrification of fleets is accelerating at pace with more businesses introducing or considering EVs sooner rather than later. Indeed, 84% of SME managers are more likely to consider adding EVs to their fleet compared with 12 months ago and 50% expect to have EVs in their fleets within the next five years*. Therefore, it's

SPONSOR PROFILE





imperative that businesses have easy-to-access customer service throughout their journey to ensure a smooth transition. From roadside repair services for EVs, through to charge point management and proactive vehicle maintenance.

Ensuring that businesses feel supported throughout the EV transition by means of education for drivers and fleet managers about the benefits of EVs, such as vehicle handovers and support to engage with the charging network is also essential.

Early adoption

As our research revealed, fleets are adopting electric far faster than the private market. While there's still plenty of work to be done around education and ensuring individual drivers are confident with all aspects of EVs, businesses are beginning to understand the benefits of wholelife costs for different powertrains.

While Zap-Map data shows the number of charge point connectors almost doubled between 2018 and 2020, the public charging point network is a current focus of attention, and while it is perhaps not as

underdeveloped as many assume, there is certainly a lot to do to improve it.

Influencing the automotive landscape

The next five years will prove pivotal in terms of meeting the Government's 2030 electrification target and there are numerous opportunities to help fleets tackle more difficult vehicle types and usage patterns. Looking ahead, it's clear fleets will be hugely influential in determining which other alternative fuels will be favoured by drivers. It's therefore important that we continue to support the wider alternative fuels mix, including CNG, LPG and hydrogen.

As we head into a digital-first environment, it's important that we don't lose sight of the power of relationships and customer service, but instead that we recognise the significant progress which has been made to support fleets and businesses as they evolve in line with tightening environmental requirements and rapidly-changing social trends.

At the AA, we have made significant progress to support fleets on this journey.

"It's clear fleets will be hugely influential in determining which other alternative fuels will be favoured by drivers"

Gavin Franks

Our continued innovation, roadside capabilities and customer service keeps us ahead of the curve with supporting businesses and their drivers. So, whatever your route to embracing alternative fuels, we're with you every step of the way.

To download your copy of New Horizons: Technology, customer service and the evolving automotive landscape, visit: <https://bit.ly/2VlJtwN>

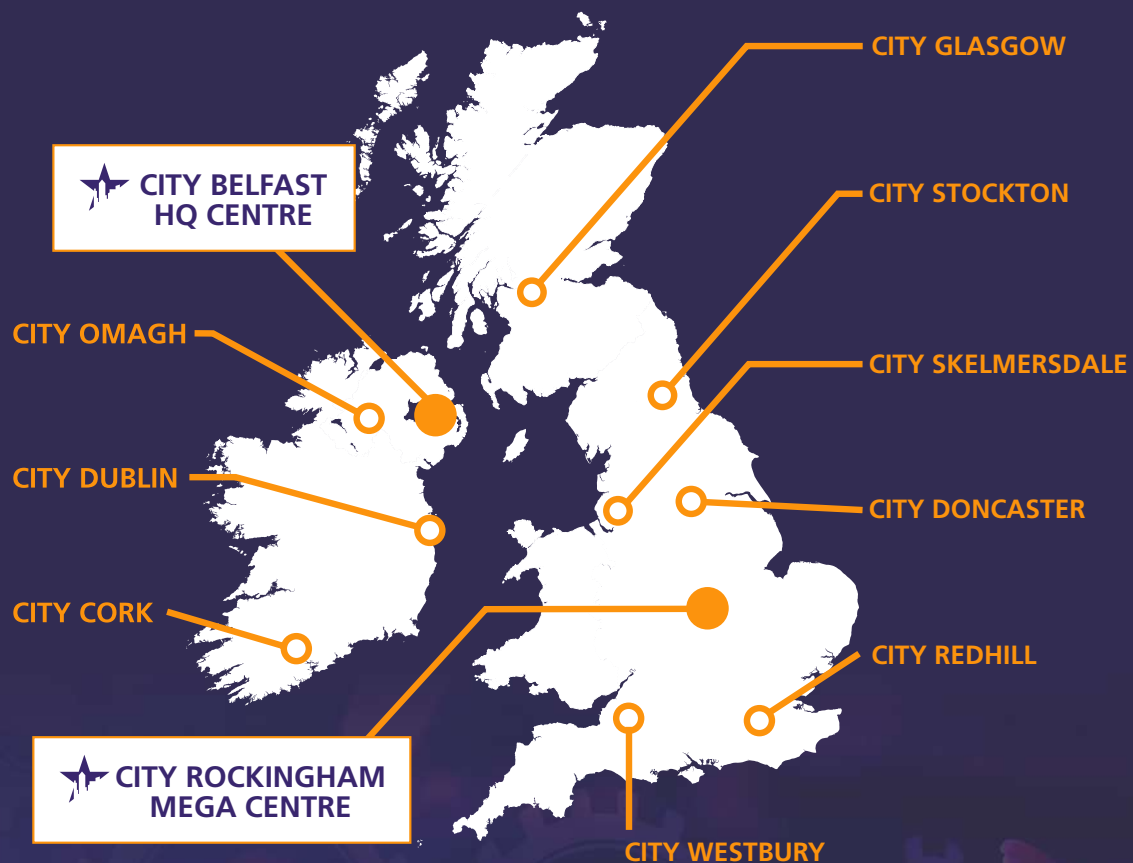
*New Horizons 2021: Technology, customer service and the evolving automotive landscape

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THE AWARDS

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THE JUDGES



Stephen Briers
Fleet News
Fleet/manufacture /
supplier categories



Simon Gray
SSE
Supplier categories



Andy Picton
Glass's
Manufacturer categories



Julie Madoui
Kier Group
Fleet categories



Paul Hollick
AFP chair
Fleet categories



Lorna McAtear
National Grid
Supplier and manufacturer
categories



Stewart Lightbody
AFP vice-chair
Fleet categories



Ken Brown
Cap HPI
Manufacturer categories



James Rooney
British Gas
Manufacturer categories



Martin Ward
Industry consultant
Manufacturer categories



Matt de Prez
Fleet News
Manufacturer categories



Andy Cutler
Glass's
Manufacturer categories

WELCOME



We were delighted to welcome almost 900 guests to our awards summer garden party at Ascot Racecourse, a little less than 16 months after the previous ceremony took place at the

Grosvenor House Hotel shortly before we went into the first lockdown.

This was a very different awards celebration, more relaxed with a smart casual dress code replacing formal black tie. It also doesn't rain inside the Grosvenor and we had to dodge the showers throughout the afternoon. Fortunately, for the majority of guests, this didn't ruin their enjoyment of the day during which we were thoroughly entertained by fabulous host Russell Kane while applauding the excellence of our 36 winners.

For one afternoon, we were able to forget Covid, Brexit, car/van lead times, driver shortages, electric vehicle strategies and all the other challenges clogging up fleets' to-do lists and, instead, focus on meeting colleagues and peers, and raising a glass to honour the best people, companies and vehicles in fleet.

Thanks to our sponsors, without whom the awards would not be possible, and my judging panel for the many hours spent helping us select the winners.

Their support, and that of chair Christopher Macgowan OBE and auditor Brian Cooper from EY, ensure the integrity of the awards is maintained.

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

AUDITORS



The role of **Brian Cooper**, senior manager at Ernst & Young (EY), left, at the Fleet News Awards is to provide an independent view of the process adhered to by the judging panels as they consider

the sometimes lengthy list of entrants for each category in the manufacturer and supplier awards.

He supports the chairman, Christopher Macgowan OBE, on points of procedure and to ensure consensus around the table with regard to the final conclusions.

What he does not do, however, is vote at any stage in the proceedings or influence the debate.

Cooper ensures that the reasons for non-inclusion are given the same level of importance as the winners and those shortlisted or highly commended.

When it comes to the final voting, EY records the voting and advises the judging panel of the outcome.

CHAIRMAN



Christopher Macgowan OBE
former chief executive, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders



Stewart Taylor
Police Scotland
Fleet categories



Peter Weston
Arcus
Supplier categories



Jo Coffey
Anglia Water
Supplier and manufacturer categories



Graham Short
Zip Water (UK)
Supplier categories



Mark Jowsey
KeeResources
Manufacturer categories



Debbie Floyd
Bauer Media
Manufacturer categories



Matt Curtis
LeasePlan UK
Manufacturer categories



Shaun Sadler
Arval
Manufacturer categories



Chris Connors
Countryside Properties
Manufacturer categories

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Stuart Thomas, director of fleet and accident management services, the AA (right), presents the Hall of Fame commemorative plaque to Brian Johnson's daughter Nicola and son Richard. Comedian Russell Kane (left), the event host, looks on. Right: a standing ovation for Brian Johnson



FLEET NEWS HALL OF FAME

Winner: **Brian Johnson**

The Fleet News Hall of Fame is presented each year in recognition of someone who has made a real impact on the fleet sector, honouring their lifetime of achievement.

This year's inductee is Brian Johnson, the founder and former chairman of The Grosvenor Group who sadly passed away last year at the age of 74.

Well-known throughout the fleet sector, Johnson was born in 1945 and began his career in the

motor industry as a salesman at Croyland Motors in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire.

Following a time as managing director of Reliance Leasing, he established Grosvenor Leasing in 1981, which has since become the largest privately-owned contract hire and fleet management company in the UK.

Over the years, astute purchases of automotive companies paved the way to develop The Grosvenor Group, with its portfolio of brands including Interactive Fleet Manage-

ment, York Ward and Rowlett, and Croyland Car Megastore.

Johnson was an innovator and a trailblazer in automotive.

He will be remembered for several industry firsts, perhaps the best-known being the retailing of ex-contract hire vehicles direct to the public rather than processing them through the auction houses.

He led by example, never asking his staff to do anything that he would not do himself, no matter how menial the task.

He was a true mentor who inspired others to achieve both their personal and business aspirations and will be missed by all he met.

The business was a huge part of his life and his daughter Nicky and son Richard are dedicated to continuing this legacy in his memory. Nicky has assumed the role of chairman while Richard will continue as managing director of Grosvenor subsidiary companies Holmere Developments and Croyland Rentals.

RECENT INDUCTEES

2020 Liz Hollands

2019 Ian Hill and Graham Telfer

2018 Mike Street, Phil Clifford and Maurice Elford

2017 David Hosking and Colin Marriott

2016 John Pryor, Andrew Mann and Peter Roper-Hall

2015 Larry Bannon and Hugh Wallace

2014 Val South and Peter Cakebread

2013 Nigel Trotman and David Graham

2012 Kevin Griffin, Vince Kinner and Julie Jenner



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Reflex Vehicle Hire sales director Lisa Spong presents the trophy to British Gas head of fleet Steve Winter (centre)

FLEET MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Winner: **Steve Winter, British Gas**

Last year, British Gas won Fleet of the Year – More Than 1,000 Vehicles; this year, head of fleet Steve Winter collects the Fleet Manager of the Year trophy.

Winter manages the third largest fleet in the UK and has one of the most ambitious electrification strategies, having already taken on 1,000 electric vans and placed an order for a further 2,000. The entire British Gas fleet of 9,500 vans and 1,500 company cars is on track to switch to full electric by 2026.

The fleet strategy is to be “better than business as usual”, says Winter, although the electrical vehicle (EV) transition is now seen as business as usual. Total cost of ownership modelling proves the financial case, with the company feeding its learnings into Optimise Prime, Europe’s biggest EV trial.

Winter’s fleet strategy also encompasses modern car schemes (including grey fleet), safety and business/innovation. Linked to parent Centrica’s carbon neutral ambitions, it is designed to ensure the fleet delivers class-leading performance.

Winter is a big believer in strong supplier relationships. Each contract emphasises the need for innovation and creativity with the expectation that initiatives will be recommended and introduced during the period of the contract. Suppliers are keen to test new ideas and methods with the British Gas fleet.

Over the past year, Winter has reviewed the British Gas risk assessment policy, introducing video user guides for vans, installing QR codes with links to driver guides in vehicles and reissuing driver handbooks. He

works with industry experts to ensure vehicles and their racking/equipment are safe and to mitigate any potential manual handling risks. This is complemented by processes for health care professionals to evaluate and policies to rectify any areas of concern.

Winter takes a holistic approach to fleet management, incorporating mobility services as well as the fleet’s cars and vans into his planning. He is always looking ahead, as shown by clear succession plans that will ensure continuity within the business.

FINALISTS

- Matthew Hammond, Altrad Services (at the time of entry)
- Shaun Atton, Auto Windscreens
- Kevin Booker, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

- Steve Winter, British Gas
- Fraser Crichton, Dundee City Council
- Tony Murphy, J Murphy & Sons
- Lorna McAtear, National Grid
- Wayne Warburton, Siemens
- Jiggs Bharij, The Metropolitan Police

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Matthew Hammond, ex-Altrad Services (he is now with M Group)
- Lorna McAtear, National Grid



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Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers (right) presents the award to CityFleet Networks operations director Jan Kozłowski (centre)

EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Winner: CityFleet Networks

The Covid-19 pandemic was a source of significant disruption for the majority of fleets, but CityFleet Networks was able to react quickly to help the NHS and local communities.

The company owns and operates an ever-growing fleet of vetted and approved taxi, car and coach services throughout the UK.

It successfully completed more than 620,000 trips within the first 12 months of the pandemic, including transporting essential key workers safely to and from their workplaces, elderly and

vulnerable people to and from medical appointments, and the general public for any urgent travel requirements.

It also supported the NHS and local communities by delivering vital medical supplies, equipment and food parcels to people who were advised not to leave their homes, while working alongside various charities to deliver food parcels to the homeless.

Part of the reason CityFleet was able to react so quickly is that its parent company ComfortDelGro is based in Singapore which had experienced the pandemic earlier than the UK, so advice on

measures and best practices were shared early on.

The UK operation was able to secure PPE supplies through a contact in Italy: these were delivered within four working days and all drivers were supplied with face masks, protective gloves, hand sanitisers and disinfectant spray.

CityFleet also invested in a vehicle cleaning service which was offered free to all its drivers.

To recruit drivers during the pandemic, it introduced CityFleet Academy – an online training school – which allowed it to maintain social distancing measures by avoiding in-house training.

This consists of online training videos to ensure drivers are taught on vital elements of customer service, disability awareness and road passenger safety.

When the rapid roll-out of vaccinations began earlier this year, CityFleet was able to react quickly by offering a fixed discounted fare for all passengers to travel to and from their appointments to provide a safe form of transportation at an affordable rate.

Due to the company's prompt action, it was able to transport several hundreds of patients to and from their appointments.

FINALISTS

- CityFleet Networks
- Rivus
- Mobile Testing Unit Project Delivery Team

(Crown Commercial Service, Department for Health & Social Care, LeasePlan UK, Renault UK and TGS)

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Mobile Testing Unit Project Delivery Team (Crown Commercial Service, Department for Health & Social Care, LeasePlan UK, Renault UK and TGS)

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FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR (CAR): BMW



Winner's comments

BMW UK is delighted to be awarded the reader voted Fleet Manufacturer of the year 2021, to follow on from our success last year. Our strong sales performance during 2020 is a testament to our model range, ongoing commitment to our customer's needs and the support they receive from the team. We continue to push boundaries to ensure BMW UK remains at the forefront of fleet.

The BMW Group delivered an astounding number of electrified vehicles in 2020, from the all-electric BMW i3 to the latest addition plug-in hybrid range. By 2025, BMW Group will have 25 electrified models in its range including 12 all-electric models such as the BMW i4 and BMW iX.



Email: info@bmwcorporatesupport.co.uk Telephone: 01252 920800



BMW Group UK general manager, corporate sales Rob East (centre) collects the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers (right)

FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR (CAR)

Winner: **BMW**

BMW has taken the triple crown after being voted by UK fleets as the best car manufacturer for the third consecutive year.

Led by no-nonsense general manager, corporate sales Rob East, the company is spearheading the premium charge into electric vehicles (EVs) and plug-in hybrid with a product launch plan that will see 25 EVs introduced within the next

two years, of which almost half will be full electric. This year, BMW launches the all-electric iX3, iX SUV and i4 four-door coupe.

East predicts that full electric could account for a third of BMW's fleet registrations by 2025, rising to half by 2030. However, that could increase as company car drivers increasingly bypass plug-in to make the straight jump from diesel to full battery electric.

"EVs were a marginal choice; now they are a prudent, pragmatic

choice for company car drivers," East says.

BMW has used the market disruption caused by the pandemic to reassess its business strategies. East describes it as a "catalyst for change", with BMW switching its approach from a supply-led model to demand-led.

"Our sales plan this year is all about growing our retail, our SME (small-to-medium enterprise) and our corporate share, while actively reducing that short

cycle business and our internal volume," he says.

It has seen daily rental volumes fall by more than 40% in the first five months of 2021, on top of a 51.5% reduction last year.

East has also reviewed the fleet structure to ensure BMW is easy to do business with. He has introduced Inside Edge rewards for company car drivers which supports the overarching business strategy of expanding and improving the customer experience.

FINALISTS

■ BMW
■ Audi
■ Ford

■ Mercedes-Benz
■ Tesla
■ Volkswagen

■ Volvo



Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers (right) presents the award to Ford of Britain fleet director Neil Wilson (centre)

FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR (VAN)

Winner: **Ford**

Following the merger of the Commercial Fleet Awards into the Fleet News Awards this year, one thing hasn't changed: Ford continues its dominance in the reader-voted van fleet manufacturer of the year, collecting the trophy for the third consecutive year.

As the UK's top selling van maker for more than half a century, Ford is ubiquitous in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) fleet sector. After all

this time, it still accounts for a third of new van registrations, while year-on-year registrations have only fallen once in the past nine months.

There is always the risk of over-familiarity – there can be barely a van fleet operator that hasn't experienced a Ford LCV at some point – but Ford fleet director Neil Wilson is constantly looking at ways to improve the service his customers receive.

A priority for this year is to simplify customer touchpoints and relationships, with a number

of initiatives undergoing trials. The focus is on flexibility.

Ford has also launched the Ford Live uptime software, which uses real-time data to provide fleets with vehicle-specific maintenance information across more than 250 data points, including oil life, fuel performance and AdBlue levels.

It enables operators to personalise service scheduling at the most efficient time and send drivers notifications when an action is identified that could help prevent a breakdown.

Ford projections suggest it could cut vehicle downtime by up to 60% and roadside assistance callouts by 30% due to fewer breakdowns and workshop visits and by enabling shorter servicing/repair times. Wilson describes it as a "game changer in how we look after our fleet customers".

Ford is also determined to show market leadership when it comes to electric vans, pledging to offer a full electric or plug-in hybrid option across its entire LCV line up by 2024.

FINALISTS

- Ford
- Mercedes-Benz
- Peugeot

- Renault
- Vauxhall
- Volkswagen



Volvo Trucks sales director for the south Chris Donnelly picked up the joint award



Mercedes-Benz Trucks UK managing director Wolfgang Theissen with the trophy

FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR (TRUCKS)

Joint winners: **Mercedes-Benz Trucks and Volvo Trucks**

This year's trophy is shared by two brands that equally impressed *Fleet News* readers, in this reader-voted category.

Rival firms Mercedes-Benz Trucks and Volvo Trucks offer broad range of models to suit haulage and construction fleets, as well as specialist models. Aftersales support is a crucial element for fleet operators and is a key focus for the winning manufacturers.

Both have strong dealer networks that cover the UK.

The truck makers agreed to collaborate on the development of hydrogen fuel cell powertrains, to suit environmentally-friendly long-distance transport operations. The common goal is for both to offer their own heavy-duty vehicles with fuel cells for series production in the second half of the decade. They are also both investing in electric trucks, each with a range of zero-emission options in the pipeline.

Volvo Trucks has already started selling its new electric Volvo FH and FM models, while Mercedes-Benz Trucks offers the Fuso

eCanter and has just revealed its new eActros model.

Technology is becoming an increasingly important part of truck fleet management and both brands have developed their own connected services, allowing maintenance requirements to be monitored remotely and truck health warnings to be relayed to operators. This helps operators to maximise uptime and reduce repair costs.

Mercedes-Benz introduced its MirrorCam technology on the Actros in 2019, which replaces conventional mirrors with stream-

lined cameras that feed in-cab displays. The technology removes blind spots from the side windows and gives a wider view of the area behind the cab.

Volvo Trucks, meanwhile, pioneered the automated transmission with its I-Shift unit. More than a million trucks are now using the clutch-based automatic, which helps to improve fuel consumption and driveability.

In the event of a breakdown, Mercedes-Benz Trucks provides a 24-hour roadside assistance service, Service24h. Volvo has a similar scheme – Action Service.

FINALISTS

- Mercedes-Benz Trucks
- Daf
- Iveco

- Scania
- Volvo Trucks

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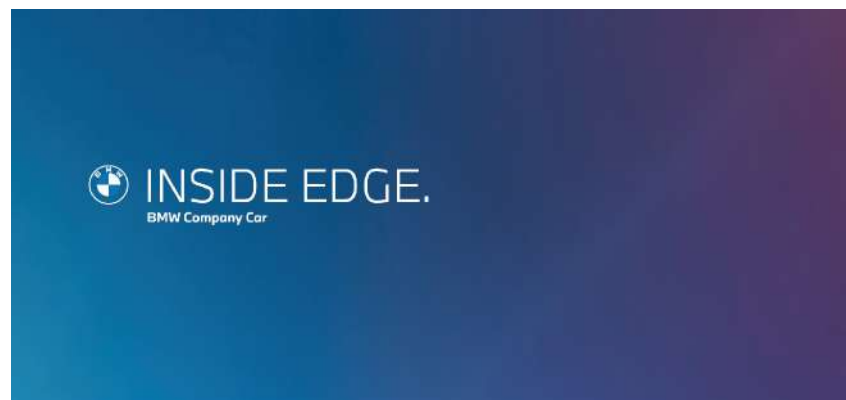
MOST IMPROVED MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR: BMW



Winner's comments

BMW UK is delighted to be the recipient of Most Improved Fleet Manufacturer. During a challenging year for many, we have ensured that key fleet-specific programmes such as the Order Status Programme and BMW Inside Edge are launched. These not only help our fleet partners enhance their offering to customers, but also ensure that any BMW company car driver has a brand experience unmatched in the sector. We hugely value their decision to choose a BMW and, as such, want to support them throughout their time with a BMW company car.

A raft of new all-electric models has now also been communicated including the BMW i4, iX and iX3.



Judges' comments:

"BMW already operates at a high level, but it continues to make significant improvements to its service proposition for fleets, leasing companies and drivers. Its support for the sector during Covid, especially frontline workers, has been outstanding, while its account managers are constantly reaching out to fleets with useful information. BMW gets it just right."



BMW Group UK general manager, corporate sales Rob East (centre) receives the award from Fleet News Awards judge and Centrica fleet engineering and innovation manager UK field operations James Rooney (right)

MOST IMPROVED FLEET MANUFACTURER OF THE YEAR

Winner: **BMW**

BMW was crowned Most Improved Fleet Manufacturer at this year's Fleet News Awards after enhancing its offering to company car drivers.

Alongside a raft of new plug-in products, it launched the Corporate Order Status Programme during the past year, with the aim of improving the customer service experience for company car drivers choosing a BMW through its leasing partners.

The programme is a series

of email communications sent to the driver about the build status and delivery timetable of their specific car.

Once the leasing company has completed the order, the driver is sent an email detailing the specification of the car and informing them of what happens next in the build, delivery and handover process, with details of contact information if they have questions.

Following this, they receive a further six emails during the build process detailing exactly at what

stage their car is at, from when it enters the paint shop to final checks, and the points at which it has been shipped and will arrive in the UK.

The emails also include videos and more insights into their car.

The final part of the process is an email which contains a link to a bespoke video showing the customer around their new car and pointing out key features.

The programme came in the wake of another driver initiative, BMW Inside Edge, which enables

company car drivers to access a range of previously unavailable offers, rewards and insights.

These include free Costa Coffee and Chili film downloads, unlimited access to online courses at The Shaw Academy – a digital learning platform – as well as discounts on many products including Harman Kardon and Hushle gyms.

It rolled out a pilot in December 2020 to 600 drivers and the feedback was universally positive, says BMW.

FINALISTS

■ BMW
 ■ Jaguar Land Rover

■ Nissan
 ■ Toyota

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Rivus Fleet Solutions sales & marketing director Jason Chamberlain (right) collected the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers (not in picture)

FLEET SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR

Winner: Rivus Fleet Solutions

When many businesses were forced to reduce operations and furlough staff during the pandemic, fleet management company Rivus Fleet Solutions operated longer hours to provide customers with a consistent level of service, meeting any additional needs and services they required.

Rivus's national network of 55 garages and 40 mobile units remained open throughout the pandemic, and none of its technicians was furloughed.

Customer service remained consistent as teams moved out of the office and set up at home.

The pandemic also saw Rivus support fleets whose operations had been affected by their own suppliers not being able to work at full capacity.

Rivus offers a full suite of fleet management services – from helping customers to modify commercial vehicles, through to buying and, new in 2020, funding. It decommissions, remarkets and disposes of vehicles at the end of their working lives.

Its customer base includes essential-service and emergency fleets, so it was imperative their needs were met during the pandemic and, vitally, vehicles were kept on the road.

Its reporting tool allows for any vehicle defects to be picked up quickly, telematics reduce driver risk and it supports more than 40,000 fuel cards. Drivers also have access to an app that helps collect and analyse vehicle data.

"Lots of business in fleet do a great job on some or many of these elements," the company says, "but

few can provide every single part of the process."

Rivus has also invested millions of pounds into on-site vehicle servicing equipment as well as charging. Customers can use those sites for storing vehicles overnight and they are also available as charging hubs.

Its technical team members undergo training on electric vehicles (EVs) that allows them to work on high voltage systems, something the company says will improve its knowledge of EV fleet management.

FINALISTS

- ARI
- FleetCheck
- Jaama

- JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Services
- Rivus Fleet Solutions
- The AA

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Intelligent Vehicle Solutions



Zenith CEO – Car & Van division Ian Hughes (right) presents the award to Mitie director of sustainability and social value Simon King (centre)

FLEET OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 1,000 VEHICLES)

Winner: Mitie

Saving the planet and preserving the lives and livelihoods of individuals have driven the fleet strategy at Mitie. It has led the facilities management professional services company to save considerable amounts of money and reduce its environmental impact.

Simon King, director of fleet, sustainability and social value, acknowledged in his entry, "Mitie is aware of the current climate emergency".

Mitie launched Plan Zero in February 2020, a commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2025. A key element is the transition away from diesel, that began the previous May, and it now runs 1,080 electric cars and vans out of a total fleet of 7,000. Every end-of-life diesel is replaced with an EV.

The transition has led to a 28% reduction in fuel consumption year-on-year and prevented 5,400 tonnes of CO₂ emissions since 2019. A target of a 15% zero carbon fleet by the 2020/21

financial year was achieved early.

Mitie lobbies for green infrastructure, holds webinars (including for the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles) and has contact with central government officials, such as Kwasi Kwarteng, secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy.

The remaining diesel vehicles have been fitted with driver behaviour LED lightbars. If the engine idles for more than a minute a buzzer sounds. This has reduced idling time by 1,000 hours per

week, reduced diesel consumption by 75,000 litres and saved 195 tonnes of carbon in the last year.

In terms of driver safety, Mitie has mandated autonomous emergency braking as standard and, together with other measures, including speed limiters on every vehicle, significant attention to driver communication, a driver risk management framework and a trial of dashcams, accident rates have fallen 14% and the average cost of incident per Mitie fleet vehicle has reduced by 34%.

FINALISTS

- Altrad Services
- Mitie
- Murphy Plant

- National Grid
- Severn Trent Water
- SSE

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Altrad Services

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Northgate Vehicle Hire sales and marketing director Neil McCrossan presents the trophy to Auto Windscreens head of fleet and facilities Shaun Atton (centre)

FLEET OF THE YEAR (UP TO 1,000 VEHICLES)

Winner: **Auto Windscreens**

Over the past year, Auto Windscreens has been developing its fleet management system adding new dashboards and functionality.

This has included sending jobs to its mechanics via tablets whose work feeds into its management information (MI), creating digital logs for vehicle service history.

The company has synchronised mechanics' equipment and diagnostic tests with the system, allowing it to service and repair vehicles itself, saving

£22,000 per year. Over the next 12 months, Auto Windscreens plans to develop the system further to ensure vehicle service and maintenance is updated alongside features of its new vans.

Shaun Atton, head of facilities and fleet, has been responsible for the fleet of 306 commercial vehicles and 41 cars for the past four years.

The company has also integrated its telematics systems with BP Fuel Cards, where cards or the BPMe app are used for payment instead of cash –

reducing downtime and increasing safety during the pandemic.

Auto Windscreens has also opened additional service centres which has reduced mileage, as it can service customers at its sites.

Atton has saved around 6% in lease costs by limiting its funding to two partners.

He has also changed fleet replacement cycles to four years for vans with 30,000 miles per annum on pooled mileage – the savings generated have allowed it to invest in factory-fitted integrated rear-view cameras.

Further savings have been made by introducing lightweight racking and better control of maintenance, which has helped to reduce downtime.

A new 'lone working' app is also being developed by the company to allow technicians to report any safety issues.

Auto Windscreens has improved fuel consumption through route planning, challenging unnecessary idling, reducing this from an average of 60 hours per month in 2019 to 27 in 2020.

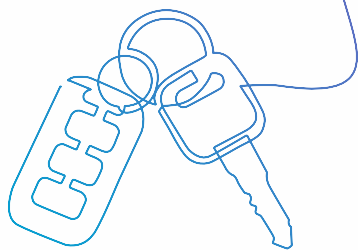
FINALISTS

- Auto Windscreens
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

- Dundee City Council
- LiveWest

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority



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Altrad Services fleet manager Sarah Turner receives the trophy from award sponsors Free2Move Lease head of corporate sales Colin Goodchild

EXCELLENCE IN FLEET SAFETY

Winner: **Altrad Services**

The commitment of Altrad Services to driver training and reducing incident rates continues to impress – last year's Safe Fleet of the Year winner has claimed the Excellence in Fleet Safety award in 2021.

The company operates 1,200-plus cars and vans and all new drivers are assessed for the first three months of employment through the use of in-vehicle telematics. Its driver training programme consists of three key elements: an e-learning

course, one-to-one driver training and a classroom course.

Drivers of large vans undergo a half-day driver training course before they are allowed on the road. This involves training in vehicle familiarisation, load security and safe loading, both face-to-face and via e-learning modules. Monitoring continues for the rest of the day.

All drivers are assessed through telematics and those deemed to be high risk are given priority, with areas of concern discussed initially between driver and fleet

or line manager. Those drivers will sit a targeted e-learning course, focusing on where their driving style can improve.

Those who are found to have not improved will sit an in-house classroom course, which is followed by further monitoring.

Company HGV drivers undertake six-monthly driver assessments, which involves accompanied driving for a shift to assess driving style and overall vehicle management.

All other drivers are assessed annually, either via a one-to-one

driver training session or online.

Although its processes have seen the number of incidents involving drivers fall, the company continually looks at how it can further improve driver standards. It coaches drivers to understand how their personality, values and beliefs impact on the way they control a vehicle.

"By using telematics data and previous accident statistics, we can begin to identify the drivers who are more likely to be involved in future incidents and act before an incident happens," it says.

FINALISTS

- Altrad Services
- Balfour Beatty Plant & Fleet Services

- DPD Group
- Mitie

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Mitie



**HIGHLY COMMENDED
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ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION

Joint winners: Dundee City Council and Mitie

The environment has proved to be a hotbed of innovation for fleets in the past year, and there was nothing to separate the work Dundee City Council and Mitie have carried out in this area. Therefore, they are our joint winners.

Dundee City Council now has more than 180 electric vehicles (EVs), representing more than 22% of its entire fleet.

Its corporate fleet department has invested more than £8 million in charging infra-

structure in the city and surrounding region.

The local authority also runs and maintains an electric pool car fleet of more than 60 vehicles.

This has seen a reduction in grey fleet usage of more than 24%. The success of this programme through fuel and servicing savings and the major benefits to the city's air quality is prompting individual council departments to look to replicate the car pool's success.

Mitie launched Plan Zero, its commitment to reaching net-zero carbon by 2025, in February last

year and one of its cornerstones is to eliminate carbon from power and transport.

One of its focuses was to reduce work travel to a minimum and, even before the Covid-19 pandemic forced home working on people, it was implementing programmes to allow employees to work without the need to travel.

This included rolling out and promoting MS Teams to employees, issuing an agile working policy and setting certain criteria to be met for travel expenses to be paid.

These initiatives have led to a 47% year-on-year reduction in business miles and a 26% reduction in overall travel.

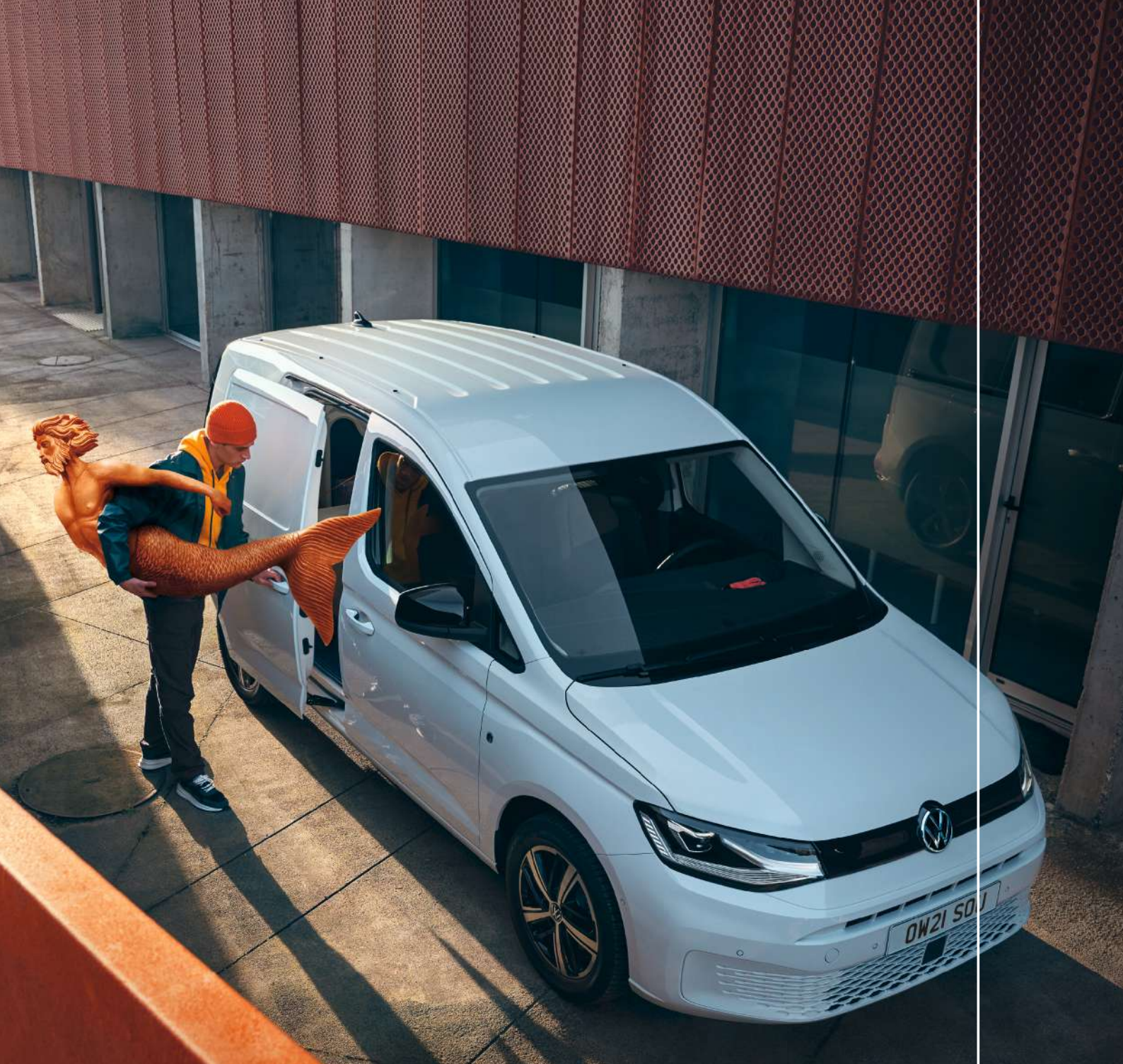
Mitie took on its first EV in May last year and it now has more than 1,100 on its 6,000-strong fleet, with every diesel replaced by a zero carbon vehicle at the end of lease.

Charge points are also installed at employees' homes and a partnership with Mina has enabled direct payment for charging at employees' homes, allowing Mitie to ensure renewable energy is used to power the EVs.

FINALISTS

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Dundee City Council

- Mitie
- Scottish Water
- Severn Trent Water
- The Metropolitan Police



Not your average loading space

The new Caddy Cargo with a wider loading bay, full steel rear wing doors and separate locking load compartment to keep your cargo secure, whatever it may be

For whatever comes next



**Commercial
Vehicles**

BEST SMALL VAN

Winner: **Volkswagen Caddy Cargo**



Both pictures: Volkswagen head of fleet Claire English receives the awards from Rivus Fleet Solutions sales & marketing director Jason Chamberlain

The all-new Caddy brings the best parts of Volkswagen's passenger car line-up to the commercial vehicle sector, ensuring this firm fleet favourite remains on top of its game.

Underpinned by the same chassis as the new VW Golf, the Caddy is more nimble, more refined and safer than ever.

It's also packed with technology, including a full digital instrument cluster and touchscreen infotainment system, plus a suite of car-derived safety systems; including adaptive cruise control, lane-

keep assist and autonomous emergency braking (AEB).

Petrol and diesel engine options are offered with high efficiency, while a plug-in hybrid is also expected to join the line-up.

The softer styling helps with aerodynamics, contributing towards a 12% reduction in fuel consumption.

As with the previous model, the new Caddy comes in two sizes: short-wheelbase Caddy and long-wheelbase Caddy Maxi.

There is only a single roof height.

FINALISTS

- Citroën Berlingo
- Ford Transit Connect
- Peugeot Partner

- Toyota Proace City
- Vauxhall Combo
- Volkswagen Caddy Cargo

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Toyota Proace City

BEST MEDIUM VAN

Winner: **Volkswagen Transporter**

Desired by drivers and fleet managers alike, along with strong residuals due to its appeal in the used van market, the VW Transporter is a clear winner in this segment.

A recent facelift saw the introduction of a new interior, with a dashboard that now faces the driver and incorporates the most up-to-date connected infotainment system.

The safety systems have also been upgraded, so the standard-fit front assist with city emergency braking can now

detect the presence of pedestrians and cyclists as well as vehicles.

Crosswind assist is now standard, too, as is driver steering recommendation, which makes gentle adjustments to maximise the vehicle's stability and counteract over-steer.

The line-up of frugal diesel engines is joined by a new electric model, known as the e-Transporter. It's built by third-party engineering firm ABT.

Running costs and payload are among the best in the segment.



FINALISTS

- Citroën Despatch
- Ford Transit Custom
- Mercedes-Benz Vito
- Peugeot Expert
- Toyota Proace
- Vauxhall Vivaro
- Volkswagen Transporter

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BEST LARGE VAN

Winner: **Mercedes-Benz Sprinter**



Mercedes-Benz Vans UK sales director Andrew Lawson (left) receives the award from Rivus Fleet Solutions sales & marketing director Jason Chamberlain

A firm favourite among UK supermarket delivery fleets, the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter has proven itself dependable time and time again.

The latest model launched in 2018 and, with a six-year stranglehold on the FN50's Most Reliable Van award, it leads the pack for its combination of build quality and unrivalled aftersales support.

The Mobilio roadside assistance service that comes with every new Sprinter helped secure its win this year, bolstered also by the introduction of a new

connected Uptime service that monitors vehicles remotely and pre-warns operators of impending faults.

A range of diesel engines, including a V6, can be specified along with an optional nine-speed automatic gearbox, front-rear- or all-wheel drive.

In total, the Sprinter has in excess of 1,700 variants.

Off-the-shelf conversions are available for fleets that need a more bespoke vehicle and there's also a new electric eSprinter model which offers a range of up to 95 miles.

FINALISTS

- Ford Transit
- Iveco Daily
- MAN TGE

- Mercedes-Benz Sprinter
- Volkswagen Crafter

BEST ZERO EMISSION VAN

Winner: **Vauxhall Vivaro-e**

Vauxhall's game-changing new Vivaro-e is among the first of a new breed of electric vans that are suited to the daily operations of most fleets, in place of traditional petrol and diesel models.

It has already proven itself to some of the UK's largest fleets, attracting four-figure order volumes from several operators in its first year on sale.

There's a choice of two battery options. The 50kWh model offers 144 miles of

range (with half-payload), while the 75kWh version is able to travel up to 205 miles between charges.

Both have 100kW charging capability as standard, enabling rapid charging of the 50kW battery from 0-80% in 32 minutes and the larger battery in 48 minutes.

The Vivaro-e also has the same load volume as its internal combustion-engined siblings and payload is competitive at up to 1,266kg. It is also capable of towing up to one tonne.

FINALISTS

- Citroën e-Despatch
- Fiat e-Ducato
- Maxus eDeliver 9
- Mercedes-Benz eSprinter
- Nissan e-NV200
- Peugeot e-Expert
- Vauxhall Vivaro-e

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Nissan e-NV200



Vauxhall Motors sales & marketing director James Taylor (left) receives the trophy from FMG commercial director Dave Parry

LEASYS Highlights

 **UNLIMITED**

**UNLIMITED MILES -
JUST TO KEEP YOU
GOING**

Leasys is a Stellantis brand

and a subsidiary of

FCA Bank, the international banking group specialised in automotive financial and insurance services. Headquartered in Italy, Leasys operates in Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, Denmark, Portugal and Greece managing a fleet of 320,000 vehicles, €3.4 billion

assets and €200m net revenues. Leasys provides various mobility solutions: from rental solutions to Fleet Management, from Car Sharing peer to peer to car subscription and used cars sale, through the Clickar brand.

Currently in 16th position of the FN50 listing, with four years of consecutive growth, Leasys has risen 15 places in the ranking since its launch making it one of the fastest growing leasing companies in the UK market today. This growth is led by the popularity of its new mobility solutions, like Leasys Miles and Smart

Last year Leasys UK has grown by 23 per cent taking its fleet size to 16,461 vehicles, its largest in its history.

Renting, the introduction of new Stellantis products and the expansion of Leasys offering with other selected manufacturers, creating a new mobility provider capable of satisfying ever changing customer needs and appetite for variety.

With the mission to maintain its role as pioneers in the field of mobility to meet the changing needs of today for both business and personal customers, Leasys continues to experiment new innovative digital solutions to enhance customer experience, new forms of mobility arising

through the expanding electrification of models, based on pay as you go solution or

subscription type contracts. With its brand Clickar for pre-owned vehicles, it is also experimenting new ways to leverage its wide network connections in increasing market reach and efficiencies on assets disposal.

Fleet Highlights



+13%

increase in average funding



37% vs 63%

Business Contract Hire/
Personal Contract Hire split



+23%

increase in fleet under
management in 2020 full
year vs 2019



+38%

increased growth for LCV
business in 2020 full year
vs 2019



FN50 ranking from 34th to
16th position since launch

Source: Fleet News November 2020



Most sold cars:

**Fiat 500, Jeep Renegade,
Vauxhall**



Most sold LCVs:

Fiat Ducato, Fiat Doblo



Fastest growing brand:
Vauxhall



New products & Services:
**Leasys Unlimited, Clickar,
Smart Renting, Buy My
Leasys Vehicle and
Leasys Miles [Fleet News
Awards 2021 Finalist]**



Customer Satisfaction
★★★★★ 4.7/5



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RIGID TRUCK OF THE YEAR (6-16 TONNES)

Winner: Iveco Daily (7-Tonne)



Iveco light business line director Mike Cutts (left) receives the award from Rivus Fleet Solutions sales & marketing director Jason Chamberlain

Iveco has a unique product offering with its Daily 7-Tonne providing the capabilities of a small truck along with the efficiency and driveability attributes of a van.

For urban operators, the vehicle's low van-derived cab offers improved visibility when compared with traditional delivery trucks. The cab also provides a higher level of driver comfort and is easier to enter and exit.

It's available as a chassis cab, panel

van, or minibus, and uses a 3.0-litre engine with up to 210PS that can be fuelled by diesel or natural gas.

With a payload of up to 4,900kg, this Daily can carry up to one tonne more than equivalent medium range vehicles.

The extensive line-up includes wheelbases ranging from 3,450mm to 5,100mm and maximum widths up to 2.55 metres, to suit a wide range of requirements. The crew-cab version can seat up to seven, while the minibus can carry 22 passengers.

FINALISTS

- Daf LF
- Fuso Canter
- Iveco Daily 7-Tonne
- Mercedes-Benz Atego
- Renault Trucks D
- Volvo FL

RIGID TRUCK OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 16 TONNES)

Winner: Daf CF

As one of the most versatile trucks currently on sale, the Daf CF can suit the needs of distribution, long-distance haulage or construction fleets, while offering class-leading reliability, versatility, efficiency and driver comfort.

Whether you need a two-, three- or four-axle truck, single or double drive, there is a CF to meet your needs. There are many options to customise the cab, both to personal taste and transport needs.

In addition to the proven Paccar MX-11

and MX-13 engines, the CF is also available with a 6.7-litre PX-7 engine to suit lighter distribution applications.

Higher torque at lower revs combined with optimised drivelines, high-efficiency rear axles, enhanced electronics and aerodynamic improvements result in fuel efficiency improvements of up to 7% for long haul journeys.

Service intervals of up to 124,000 miles are also achievable, dependent on operation conditions, helping operators to minimise costs and downtime.



Daf Trucks retail sales director Gareth Halliwell (left) receives the award from Rivus Fleet Solutions sales & marketing director Jason Chamberlain

FINALISTS

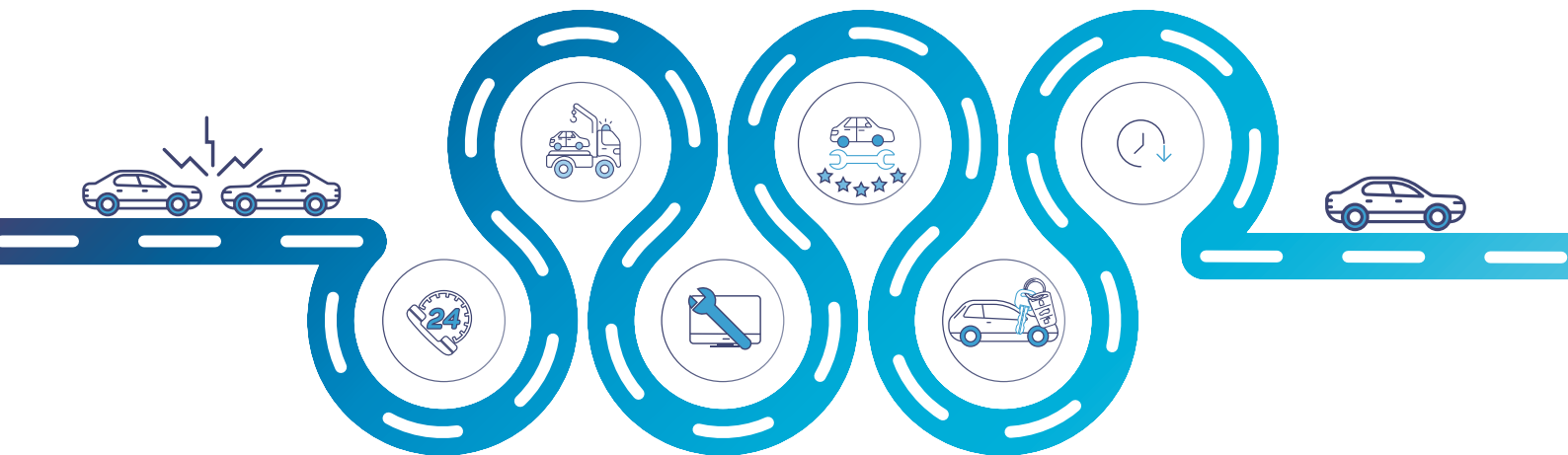
- Daf CF
- Renault Trucks D
- Iveco Eurocargo
- MAN TGM
- Mercedes-Benz Actros

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We'll keep the driver mobile throughout the claim with our wide variety of replacement vehicles.

BEST PLUG-IN HYBRID CAR

Winner: **Toyota Rav4**



Toyota & Lexus Fleet general manager Stuart Ferma (left) collects the award from FMG commercial director Dave Parry

While the core attributes of the Rav4 were already enough for it to take the Mid-size SUV of the Year trophy two years in a row, the PHEV model sets a new benchmark for cars with a petrol-electric powertrain.

By pairing an 18kWh battery with the Rav4's existing hybrid system, Toyota's engineers were able to achieve a zero-emission range of around 46 miles – considerably more than the average in this category.

The petrol engine and electric motors are calibrated for seamless interaction, meaning drivers can expect smooth and consistent power delivery at all times.

In most situations, drive is provided by the electric motors and the engine is used to charge the battery. Engine power is only directed to the wheels when maximum performance is required.

This means that real-world fuel economy is significantly better than many other PHEVs, even when the car is not plugged in.

FINALISTS

- Audi A3
- BMW 330e
- Mercedes-Benz A-Class
- Škoda Octavia
- Toyota Rav4

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- BMW 330e
- Škoda Octavia

BEST ZERO EMISSION CAR

Winner: **Polestar 2**

The Polestar 2 is the electric car that fleets have been waiting for. With concept-car looks, premium build quality and affordable pricing, it has eclipsed the efforts of established car brands.

It has a range of up to 335 miles (dependent on version), impressive drivability and strong performance.

A practical hatchback body combines with an executive interior, which features the very latest in car technology and sustainable vegan materials.

The exclusivity of the brand boosts desirability among drivers, while pricing from less than £40,000 makes it accessible to many.

While Polestar is a new brand, it benefits from the existing Volvo aftersales network, meaning fleet operators can rest assured that repairs and maintenance can be carried out without a hitch.

Behind the scenes, Polestar has a robust fleet sales strategy to ensure drivers get the support they need, while each customer is promised a VIP experience.

FINALISTS

- Ford Mustang Mach-E
- Kia e-Niro
- Polestar 2
- Tesla Model 3
- Volkswagen ID3
- Volkswagen ID4

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Volkswagen ID4



Polestar UK CEO Jonathan Goodman (left) collects the award from FMG commercial director Dave Parry

BEST LOWER MEDIUM CAR

Winner: **Volkswagen Golf**



VW head of fleet Nick O'Neill (left) receives the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

Now in its eighth generation, the latest VW Golf has a sharper look without sacrificing core fleet values.

There's a host of new technology available as standard, including a fully digital cockpit and enhanced connectivity, as well as a plethora of safety and driver assistance systems.

The model range is broad, offering something to suit all requirements. From the entry-level 1.0-litre TSI petrol to the performance oriented GTD, the Golf sets a standard for efficiency.

A new eHybrid plug-in hybrid model joined the line-up earlier this year, bringing a second variant into the 6% benefit-in-kind (BIK) band, alongside the existing GTE. There is also a mild hybrid eTSI model, which helps to keep CO₂ emissions down.

With a high level of equipment, impressive comfort levels and a more engaging drive, there's plenty of positive attributes to keep drivers happy.

Running costs are equally as impressive while strong residuals ensure leasing rates are favourable too.

FINALISTS

- Ford Focus
- Nissan Leaf
- Seat Leon
- Škoda Octavia
- Toyota Corolla

- Volkswagen Golf
- Volkswagen ID3

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Volkswagen ID3

BEST SMALL CAR

Winner: **Peugeot 208**

Peugeot has retained its place as the leader of the small-car segment in this year's awards, with the 208 picking up the Best Small Car gong for the second consecutive year.

As one of the first small cars to be offered with petrol, diesel and fully electric powertrains, the sharp-looking 208 set a new standard when it launched.

Class-leading refinement and driveability combine with an interior no rival can match, thanks to its i-cockpit layout.

All trim levels come well equipped and

the latest driver assistance and convenience systems are available, including Peugeot Drive Assist for semi-autonomous driving.

Electric versions are almost indistinguishable from other 208s, yet they pack a 50kWh battery giving a range of more than 200 miles and a rapid-charging time of 0-80% in 30 minutes.

Competitive running costs and strong residual values ensure the new model holds favour with fleet managers, while the car's capabilities and style boost its desirability among drivers.



Peugeot managing director Julie David receives the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

FINALISTS

- Ford Fiesta
- Mini Hatch
- Peugeot 208
- Renault Clio

- Toyota Yaris
- Vauxhall Corsa

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Mini Hatch

BEST COMPACT PREMIUM CAR

Winner: **Audi A3**



Audi UK national fleet sales manager Glenn Stanton (left) receives the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

In one of the smallest – yet most hotly contested – categories in this year's awards, the Audi A3 emerges as the winner thanks in part to its broad range of powertrains.

Alongside conventional petrol and diesel offerings there's a pair of plug-in hybrids, offering benefit-in-kind tax from 7%, plus a mild-hybrid.

The 40 TFSI and its sportier 45 TFSI sibling provide up to 40 miles of zero-emission driving from a single charge.

Underpinned by the same new platform as the latest VW Golf, the A3 benefits from the same technological and drivability enhancements that wowed judges in the Upper Medium category.

As a premium model, the A3 offers a higher-grade interior with high-resolution displays and luxurious appointments. It can also be specified as a saloon.

The A3 performs as well on the motorway as it does in urban settings, with useful driver aids that are usually found in the segment above.

FINALISTS

- Audi A3
- BMW 1 Series
- Mercedes-Benz A-Class
- Mini Clubman

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- BMW 1 Series

BEST UPPER MEDIUM CAR

Winner: **Škoda Superb**

Škoda's Superb remains unbeaten in the Best Upper Medium Car category for the sixth consecutive year.

A round of updates were applied to the model as part of a mid-life facelift in 2019, including the introduction of a plug-in hybrid iV variant, helping to secure its success once again in this year's awards.

The Superb provides executive car levels of style, comfort and quality, at a price point that no other car in this segment can match.

It has a gigantic boot and generous cabin space, which could place it in the segment above. The build quality and fit and finish are equally as impressive.

The latest models feature a new connected infotainment system and digital instruments. There is also a revised 2.0 TDI engine, which has been re-engineered for lower emissions and better fuel consumption.

The estate version offers the largest load space in the segment, making it ideal for families or work-related cargo.



Škoda UK national fleet sales manager Matt Hattersley (left) receives the award from Fleet News editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

FINALISTS

- Peugeot 508
- Škoda Superb
- Toyota Camry
- Vauxhall Insignia
- Volkswagen Passat

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Volkswagen Passat

Advertisement feature



BEST PREMIUM CAR: BMW 3 SERIES



Carmaker's comments

BMW UK is delighted to regain its position of Best Premium Car of the year 2021. The efficiency, driveability and connected drive technology of the BMW 3 Series makes it a package difficult to beat.

The model has long been recognised as the drivers' choice in the sector thanks to its focus on driving dynamics.

Low BIK tax and high fuel economy give drivers the reassurance of cost-effectiveness, while the BMW brand and its associated back-up services give fleet managers the confidence they need. Performance and handling remain a key attribute of the new 3 Series, combining a comfortable and smooth ride with nimble handling when required.



Fleet News says:

"The BMW 3 Series has long been the aspirational vehicle for many mid-management company car drivers. Its mix of badge appeal, efficient engines and sporty characteristics has proved to be a winning formula in the corporate market, as its constant place among the most popular fleet models demonstrates"



RANGE COSTS

P11D £31,470-£49,190

CO₂ (WLTP) 30g/km-184g/km

Annual BIK tax 11-37%

Running costs (ppm) 44.29-68.67

FLEET PICK SPEC

BMW 330e M Sport

P11D price £41,640

Running cost (4yr/80k) 50.4ppm

CO₂ (WLTP) 31g/km

Mpg combined 201.8

Annual BIK tax 11%



BEST EXECUTIVE CAR

Winner: **BMW 5 Series**



Both pictures: BMW Group UK general manager, corporate sales Rob East (left) receives the award from *Fleet News* editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

Unbeaten for the previous three years, the BMW 5 Series now makes it four in a row by retaining its crown as the fleet industry's Best Executive Car. A comfortable and spacious interior makes the 5 Series ideal for long journeys, with adequate power coming from its range of powertrains.

It delivers a driving experience like no other car in the segment, but equally impresses when it comes to running

costs – as one of the most affordable cars in the category.

Following a recent facelift, the car now offers a larger infotainment screen, more standard equipment and, crucially, an expanded range of plug-in hybrids.

The existing 530e is now joined by estate and xDrive all-wheel-drive versions. There is also a more potent 545e, with a six-cylinder petrol engine.

Drivers love it, fleet managers love it; the 5 Series ticks all the boxes and more.

FINALISTS

- Audi A6
- BMW 5 Series
- Lexus ES
- Jaguar XF

- Mercedes-Benz E-Class
- Volvo S/V90

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Mercedes-Benz E-Class

BEST PREMIUM CAR

Winner: **BMW 3 Series**

Once again, the BMW 3 Series dominates the premium car category and continues to hold the torch of its forefathers as a segment leader. It blends refinement, efficiency and driveability into a package that no rivals can beat.

The 330e plug-in hybrid, which is available as a saloon or estate, has quickly become a fleet favourite thanks to an electric range of up to 40 miles and impressive acceleration.

The mild-hybrid diesel engines also have

low CO₂ emissions to ensure drivers pay the lowest possible BIK. Petrol models equally perform well for fleets, with competitive running costs.

Connected services enable drivers to locate the car using an app, unlock it and drive away using their smartphone as a key and stream music directly from the infotainment system.

Performance and driveability remain key attributes of the new 3 Series, combining a comfortable and smooth ride with nimble handling when required.

FINALISTS

- Audi A4
- BMW 3 Series
- Jaguar XE
- Mercedes-Benz C-Class
- Polestar 2

- Tesla Model 3
- Volvo S/V60

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Tesla Model 3



Advertisement feature



BEST EXECUTIVE CAR: BMW 5 SERIES



Carmaker's comments

BMW UK is delighted to be unbeaten for the fourth consecutive year, with the BMW 5 Series retaining its crown as the fleet industry's favourite executive car.

A comfortable and spacious interior makes the model ideal for long journeys, with adequate power coming from its range of powertrains.

It delivers a driving experience like no other car in the segment, but equally impresses when it comes to running costs – as one of the most affordable cars in the category.

CO₂ emissions are among the lowest among its key rivals, achieved via the Plug-in Hybrid and Mild-hybrid engines, which means favourable BIK tax for drivers and low running costs for fleets.



Fleet News says:

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



RANGE COSTS

P11D £39,190-£68,610

CO₂ (WLTP) 31g/km-247g/km

Annual BIK tax 11-37%

Running costs (ppm) 50.15-94.82

FLEET PICK SPEC

BMW 530e M Sport

P11D price £52,270

Running cost (4yr/80k) 62.8ppm

CO₂ (WLTP) range 32-41g/km

Mpg combined range 156.9-201.8

Annual BIK tax 11%/£1,150

BEST COMPACT SUV

Winner: **Ford Puma**



Ford of Britain fleet director Neil Wilson (left) receives the award from *Fleet News* editor-in-chief Stephen Briers

Ford's Fiesta-based compact SUV couldn't come soon enough for UK fleets and has already cemented itself as one of the UK's best-selling new cars.

It might be a far cry from the two-door 90s coupe with which it shares a name, but the stylish crossover marries the Fiesta's famous driveability with a practical family-friendly body, offering maximum desirability.

It's good to drive, great to look at and, thanks to a range of mild-hybrid

Ecoboost powertrains, it's efficient too.

Comfort and refinement levels are also high, making it an excellent all-rounder.

Clever innovations like the Megabox – a waterproof plastic storage box under the boot carpet – further set the Puma ahead of its rivals. There's even an ST version for added kudos.

Running costs and BIK tax are on par with key rivals, while fleet operators can rest assured that resale values will be strong and reallocations are unlikely to be met with resistance.

FINALISTS

- Ford Puma
- Hyundai Kona
- Kia Niro
- Peugeot 2008
- Seat Arona
- Škoda Kamiq
- Vauxhall Mokka
- Volkswagen T-Roc

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Hyundai Kona
- Peugeot 2008

BEST MID-SIZE SUV

Winner: **Toyota Rav4**

The Toyota Rav4 impressed judges once again at this year's Fleet News Awards, taking the category for the second time thanks to its balance of running costs, practicality and efficiency.

Based on an all-new platform, the Rav4 features the latest hybrid powertrain technology from Toyota.

It utilises a 2.5-litre petrol engine, which can be paired with a Hybrid or Plug-in Hybrid system. Both deliver strong performance along with CO₂ emissions from just 22g/km.

A high level of build-quality puts the car on the coattails of the premium SUV segment.

The best-selling Design trim comes equipped with sat-nav, LED headlights and front and rear parking sensors. Toyota's suite of safety and driver assistance systems also comes as standard on all trim levels.

Compared with its predecessor, the new Rav4 has greater driver appeal thanks to improved comfort and refinement levels, plus the new powertrains are more responsive, making the car better to drive.

FINALISTS

- BMW X1
- Peugeot 3008
- Range Rover Evoque

- Toyota Rav4
- Volvo XC40



Toyota & Lexus Fleet general manager Stuart Ferma (left) receives the award from *Fleet News* editor-in-chief Stephen Briers



DELIVERING BESPOKE REMARKETING STRATEGIES FOR FLEET VENDORS

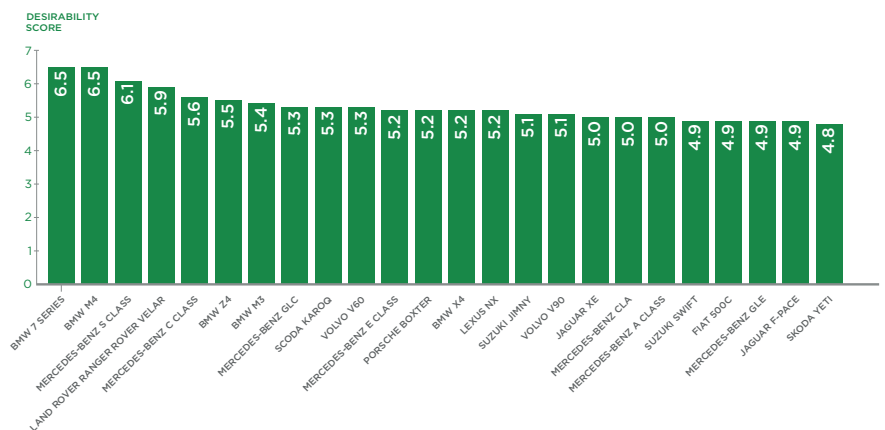
Aston Barclay has revealed its latest Used Car and Van Desirability Index for July, which highlights the most popular used vehicles at auction. Its data takes into consideration three key metrics: web views prior to sale, number of physical and online bids per sale, and the sale price achieved as a percentage of CAP average.

And it's clear to see that dealers are keen to get their hands on cars from premium car makers, as 19 out of the top 25 places are taken up by BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Jaguar, Range Rover and Lexus. Higher-end SUVs and sports cars are most sought after, as the semiconductor induced new car supply challenges have caused an increased demand for used cars.

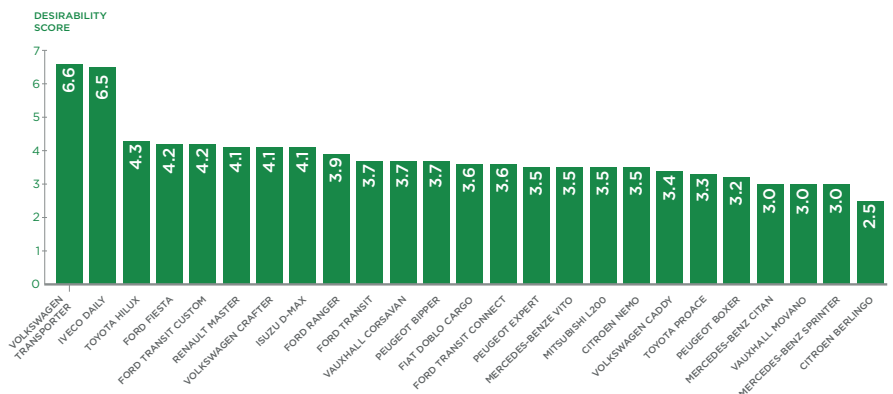
Meanwhile, the Fiat 500C, the Suzuki Jimny and the Skoda Yeti reflect the high demand at the lower price end of the market for cars, which are in demand but in short supply.

Prices in the used van market have also been buoyant for the past two years and our July index sees demand for two vans that are head and shoulders above the rest. The VW Transporter reflects the demand for panel vans, particularly from the SME sector, while the Daily is in high demand from businesses that need to carry higher payloads. A total of ten panel vans appear in the top 25, four pick-ups and 11 car-derived vans, all of which are making record prices at auction.

USED CAR DESIRABILITY INDEX



USED VAN DESIRABILITY INDEX



Want to see how Aston Barclay can help you make the most from your stock? Go to www.astonbarclay.net or contact Martin Potter via salesteams@astonbarclay.net.





Sponsored by



Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions head of corporate sales Andy Fuller (left) receives the award from Aston Barclay group sales director Richard Cross

LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR (MORE THAN 20,000 VEHICLES)

Winner: Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions

Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions (HCVS) has been named Leasing Company of the Year – 20,000-plus Vehicles – for the third successive year.

With a customer base covering everything from online supermarkets to food bank collections to blood delivery, the leasing company has played a significant role in keeping UK fleets moving during the pandemic.

Crucially, it mobilised 96% of its workforce to work from home within 24 hours of the

first lockdown, ensuring all staff had access to equipment and a safe working environment.

It identified customers operating 'critical assets' and put actions in place to support maximum vehicle uptime.

It also instigated a daily update of key suppliers to understand the availability of its support network and introduced senior management KPIs that were reviewed daily to ensure it kept fleets moving.

However, alongside offering critical support to fleets, it also enhanced its fleet offering,

providing an end-to-end electric vehicle (EV) journey for drivers.

The HCVS EV-Hub links directly to its quoting platform, giving drivers customer-specific policies as well as advice on costs and home charging.

It has appointed British Gas as charge point partner and 'rentalised' the costs within the lease, with options to opt out or pay one lump sum, including an installation support line.

It has also invested directly in the Gridserve electric forecourt build and developed a direct-

to-market EV-lease offering.

The measures, coupled with HCVS's 'customer first' culture, has delivered strong growth during the past financial year (2020/21) for the top 10 FN50 leasing company.

Profit before tax was £19.7 million, compared with the £25.7m achieved for 2019/20. HCVS has also increased its overall fleet by 17%, adding in excess of 14,000 vehicles, with the expanded fleet now comprising more than 95,000 assets despite the sharpest decline in new car registrations since 1992.

FINALISTS

- Alphabet (GB)
- Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions
- Kinto UK

- LeasePlan UK
- Volkswagen Financial Services
- Zenith

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Kinto UK

Advertisement feature



LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR: JCT600 VEHICLE LEASING SOLUTIONS



Winner's comments

"The entire VLS team has continued to work extremely hard, in tough circumstances, to deliver the highest quality services to our customers. It is their hard work, passion and energy which has enabled us to secure this fantastic award – 'thank you team'. Huge thanks to all our fantastic customers and our hard-working supply partners. Exciting times ahead"

Ben Creswick,
Managing Director, JCT600 VLS

JCT600 VLS
TRUSTED Vehicle Leasing Solutions



Customer testimonial:

"We are thrilled that JCT600 VLS have been recognised with such a prestigious industry award. As one of our most trusted suppliers, VLS offers us exceptional added value and customer service that really makes a difference to our fleet operations."

Ann Charity, Fleet Manager, Impact Handling

Visit: www.jct600vls.co.uk Call: 0113 250 0060 Email: contactvls@jct600.co.uk



Jaama managing director Martin Evans hands the trophy to JCT600 VLS MD Ben Creswick (left)

LEASING COMPANY OF THE YEAR (UP TO 20,000 VEHICLES)

Winner: **JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions**

The past year has posed challenges for all companies, and as well as helping its customers cope throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions has been able to invest in – and grow – its own business.

It has had a 100% customer retention rate for the second consecutive year, as well as achieving a significant number of new business wins, increasing its customer base by almost 20%.

The company is also seeing more conversion to sole supply agreements than ever

before in an extremely competitive market.

This success, says JCT600 VLS, is down to its transition from a business that has been renowned for customer service and retention for more than 30 years, into one that also has the best team, the best tech and the trust to deliver for the next 30 years.

Following feedback from the industry, the market and its clients, the company has made a significant investment into a market-leading customer platform which will deliver multiple schemes or policies on a single system.

This carries tailored personal,

business and individual wholelife cost calculations, enabling vehicle and funding comparisons to deliver the lowest cost, highest value fleet solutions to customers and their employees.

JCT600 VLS has also invested in people by expanding its workforce to maintain and improve its service levels.

It has been able to do this despite the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw it launch an instant review of its continuity plans.

Within 48 hours it had achieved full business mobilisation, ensuring zero service downtime.

The company also offers

consultancy services which have helped customers reduce their costs in areas such as transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs) and the implementation of fit-for-purpose funding schemes.

JCT600 VLS's approach to fleet electrification is to educate, inform and support both its customers and their employees throughout their whole EV journey.

This includes creating individual customer road to zero plans, covering funding, total cost of ownership and analysis of operational fleet requirements to identify which vehicles can be switched and when.

FINALISTS

- ARI
- JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions
- Ogilvie Fleet

- The Grosvenor Group
- Tusker Direct
- VMS Fleet Management

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Ogilvie Fleet



The AA director of fleet and accident management Stuart Thomas (centre) is presented with the award by Anglian Water fleet manager and Fleet News Awards judge Jo Coffey

FLEET CUSTOMER PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Winner: **The AA**

The AA reacted rapidly to support customers amid the Covid-19 pandemic, going above and beyond in its partnership with the London Ambulance Service.

As demand for the service grew more than 200%, it had to add 200 additional new ambulances in three weeks to meet the demand and ensure the vehicles were road-worthy to maximise their capacity.

To get an ambulance into service usually takes longer than a month,

The AA said. The AA's provision of mechanical staff allowed London Ambulance Service to get additional new and used ambulances into its fleet fast and on the road, saving lives.

AA team members delivered mechanical work to get ambulances on the road, as well as support in preparing new vehicles for service.

The ambulance fleet increased from around 470 – of which 300-350 are available for use at any one time – to more than 600.

The AA also provided immediate technical support for London Ambulance's fleet of ambulances and 70 fast response cars – preventing an increase in vehicle downtime and the time taken to respond to emergency callouts.

To keep vital medical staff on the road, the AA provided its support with 24-hour breakdown and incident services. It sent 41 patrols which increased to 100 and around 180 staff to 12 London Ambulance locations to provide essential mechanical support and

breakdown recovery, so emergency vehicles were always ready to respond. The AA also set up a mobile garage at the Nightingale Hospital to assist with vehicles.

It also secured a deal with Euro Car Parts to provide mechanical parts for the ambulance services at cost and it extended its free breakdown service to NHS staff during the pandemic, registering 20,000 NHS employees and rescuing more than 8,000 on the road, at home or at hospital.

FINALISTS

- Enterprise
- Jaama
- Nexus Vehicle Rental

- The AA
- Zenith



National Grid fleet manager Lorna McAtear presents the award to the AA director of fleet and accident management services Stuart Thomas

INNOVATION IN MOBILITY TECHNOLOGY AWARD

Winner: The AA

The AA's Free-wheeling Hub is helping to provide businesses with the confidence that they are fully supported when they make the switch to electrification.

The technology is a new addition to the AA's Multi-Fit Wheel Kit, allowing its patrols to safely tow vehicles such as electric vehicles (EVs), 4X4s, SUVs and small vans by fitting temporary spare wheels to vehicles. The technology has its own bearing,

enabling the wheel to turn independently from the car.

Before the introduction of the Free-wheeling Hub, the AA says it was not possible to tow some vehicles with seized brakes, failed wheel bearings or electric hand-brakes, or 4X4s.

Reducing downtime for businesses and delays for drivers, the Free-wheeling Hub can also be fixed to the rear wheels of stricken vehicles, so they can be towed rather than having to wait for a flatbed recovery vehicle – reducing

downtime for businesses and delays for drivers.

The technology also reduces CO₂ emissions for breakdown recoveries as AA vans can tow more cars, freeing up large recovery trucks for complex breakdowns involving heavier or more damaged vehicles.

The Free-wheeling Hub was launched in January this year and rolled out to all patrols by the end of March following extensive testing and development over a 10-month period with 200 patrols.

Following the introduction of the Free-wheeling Hub to the AA's roadside support offering, business customers have reported benefits including the confidence to invest in their EV capabilities and faster recoveries.

The AA says that the next phase in the development of the Free-wheeling Hub will be to adapt it to ensure it is inclusive of all vehicle types as manufacturers' designs are changing to focus on lower, wider and longer body shapes to improve aerodynamics.

FINALISTS

- Allstar Business Solutions
- Fleetondemand
- Leasys UK

- Original ADS and RAC
- The AA

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Fleetondemand

OZONE™

OZone is The Grosvenor Group's innovative and multi-award winning solution to help companies navigate their way smoothly towards ultra-low emission (ULEV) and electric vehicles (EV).

ENVIRONMENTAL

Our team of experts will help you drive down your CO₂ levels and move towards a Zero emission future through a well-structured ultra low emission and electric vehicle fleet policy.

OPERATIONAL

Through our operational review, we will look at the current suitability of ULEVs and EVs for your business, and the measures that need to be in place for alternative fuels to become an effective part of your fleet strategy.

FINANCIAL

What are the real financial implications of moving to alternative fuels? Our OZone team will provide a clear and transparent analysis based on whole life costs, taxation, NI and other key considerations

For an initial, no obligation and free consultation with a member of our award winning OZone team, we would be delighted to hear from you.

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Enterprise head of sales – fleet, leasing and accident management, UK and Ireland Joanne Vickers receives the award from Grosvenor Contracts Leasing group managing director Shaun Barritt (right)

RENTAL COMPANY OF THE YEAR

Winner: Enterprise

Keeping customers moving and enabling thousands of public sector, healthcare, food and pharmaceutical organisations to continue to deliver essential services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic was a priority for Enterprise.

The company has adapted to the dramatically changing situation, finding new ways to work in the unprecedented circumstances.

It introduced measures to maintain social distancing and minimise customer interactions, such as kerbside pick-

ups and LaunchPad, a 'virtual branch' that can complete bookings anywhere.

Throughout the pandemic, Enterprise has continued to invest in local communities with a new flagship branch opening in Leeds in summer 2021, featuring EV charging points and an automated car wash using the latest water recycling technology.

The company's commitment to investing in new products and technologies is evident through its membership of the MaaS Alliance, a public-private partnership focused on facilitating MaaS

(mobility as a service), mobility innovations, transport hubs and commercial vehicle solutions, such as Flex-E-Rent (the UK's widest range of commercial vehicles on flexible payment terms, from a single day to seven-year hires), plus vehicle customisations.

Greening its fleet is another priority for Enterprise: in January, it took on 17 Toyota Mirai hydrogen fuel cell electric cars as part of efforts to explore alternative fuels to deliver low- and zero-emission transport. Its current fleet includes more than 4,000 alternative fuel vehicles.

It operates a growing number of EV-only car clubs, especially in Scotland, for businesses and individuals to trial electric vehicles.

As a service provider, Enterprise noted a shift in its relationships, evolving from rental provision into strategic support on business continuity and disaster recovery. With a truly customer-centric approach that has proved itself quickly adaptable, Enterprise focuses on having locations, technologies, vehicle range, rental periods and account management to support businesses and employees across the spectrum.

FINALISTS

- Enterprise
- Europcar Mobility Group
- Northgate Vehicle Hire

- Reflex Vehicle Hire
- Thrifty Car & Van Rental
- Volkswagen Financial Services

HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Europcar Mobility Group

Advertisement feature

FINALIST: FLEET DEALER OF THE YEAR



Vindis offers tailored solution to meet all its customer needs

Vindis Group Fleet is proud to have been shortlisted for the Fleet Dealer of the Year category at the Fleet News Awards.

For more than 15 years, Vindis Group Fleet has been providing lease companies and businesses of all sizes with a centralised supply solution for all their vehicle needs.

Our services include:

- An award-winning, first-class service.
- Bespoke supply management using a secure online solution.
- Information on vehicle funding, affinity programmes and salary sacrifice.
- Smart repairs and safety checks.
- Storage, pre-delivery inspections and delivery for other dealer groups.
- Ride-and-Drive events.

Each business has its own individual needs no matter how big or small. Here, at Vindis Group Fleet we appreciate and understand this. Therefore, we have put together a dedicated team at our fleet centre that can help provide a tailored solution to meet our customer's requirements.



We can provide information on policy, funding solutions, affinity programmes and salary sacrifice. We offer guidance on wholelife costings, as well as business and personal tax analysis on precise vehicle specification requirements. This can then be backed up by a service level agreement to ensure that what's right on day one is monitored and reviewed regularly to make sure that we continue to offer a class-leading service.

Above all, we are on hand to ensure your next fleet decision is as easy as it should be. Simply let our highly experienced team know which services you require and we will do the rest.





System Edström commercial director David Sawford (right) presents the award to Highways England head of commercial vehicle incident prevention, safety, engineering and standards Mark Cartwright (centre)

OUTSTANDING PRODUCT OR SERVICE

Winner: Highways England for CALM Driver initiative

A mental health initiative from Highways England aimed at van and truck drivers has been named the winner in the Outstanding Product or Service category at this year's Fleet News Awards.

Highways England's CALM Driver scheme was developed with the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) suicide prevention charity.

Suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 50 and data from the Office of National

Statistics (ONS) has shown van and truck drivers are 20% more likely to take their lives than other workers.

The CALM Driver campaign is designed to help drivers open up on mental health issues and direct them to other helpful resources along with CALM's crisis support.

Highways England has provided 35,000 free driver kits alongside videos to help spread the campaign message and encourage drivers to look after their mental health.

It has also added the resources

to a CPC driver training module addressing mental health issues along with parallel training resources for the van world.

As a result of the campaign, CALM's crisis lines have seen an increase in calls from commercial vehicle drivers. The campaign has also triggered other supportive well-being initiatives in participating organisations.

Highways England says, based on feedback, the initiative has probably saved lives by providing crisis support to drivers in difficulties.

It has also contributed and raised around £30,000 to support CALM's activities. Furthermore, it is working with Welcome Break to highlight the initiative at their forecourts and is in discussions with manufacturers, lease companies and other industry suppliers to expand distribution and awareness.

Highways England said that the uptake, support and enthusiasm shown by the industry since launch had confirmed the need for something to be done and the initiative is making a difference.

FINALISTS

- Arval UK for Arval Beyond
- Balfour Beatty Plant and Fleet Services for its Litter Picker
- Fleetondemand for Mobilleo

- Highways England for its CALM Driver initiative
- Mina for its EV charging solution
- VMS Fleet Management for its EV conversions of specialist vehicles

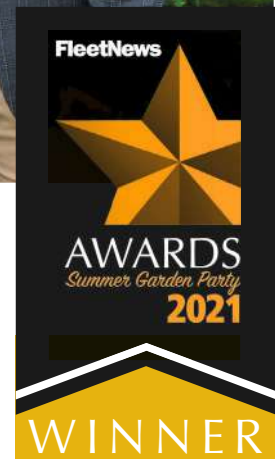
HIGHLY COMMENDED

- Balfour Beatty Plant and Fleet Services for its Litter Picker
- Mina for its EV charging solution

Advertisement feature



FLEET DEALER OF THE YEAR: JOHNSONS FLEET SERVICES



Winner's comments

"As a team driven by passion, commitment and integrity, there is no greater confirmation that we are doing a great job for our customers than receiving this award, especially for the second year running! We operate a customer-centric business that recognises the need to constantly evolve and develop in order to adapt to the ever-changing environment and our customers' needs. Every member of the team is absolutely delighted and were happy to celebrate receiving this fabulous award together!"

JOHNSONS
FLEET SERVICES



Customer testimonial:

"Having Johnsons as a partner for 16 brands makes my life so much easier. There is a great deal of respect, trust and their expertise has proven invaluable. I am always confident that, whatever the requirement, it is always managed with professionalism and a competency that is second to none."

Andrew Winstone, European Fleet Manager, Glen Dimplex Group



Leasys UK managing director Sebastiano Fedrigo (right) presents the award to Johnsons Fleet Services national leasing manager Terry Ward (centre)

FLEET DEALER OF THE YEAR

Winner: **Johnsons Fleet Services**

The ability to adapt to change and put into practice the elements needed to deliver the 'perfect fleet vehicle' has always been critical at Johnsons Fleet Services, part of Tamworth-based dealer group Johnsons Cars.

The Covid-19 pandemic challenged its 42-strong team, but didn't divert it from its fundamental course. Despite three lockdowns from March 2020, the business remained open with sufficient staff in all roles working from home.

The team supported customers with a considerable volume of concerns, but also still provided quotes and ordered vehicles. Live video handovers were introduced where it wasn't possible to meet an end-user, focusing on their personal and technical needs.

And, when deliveries were permitted, and with Covid-safe guidelines in place, Johnsons delivered 22% more vehicles in 2020 than in 2019, with 14% of all deliveries to key workers, mostly NHS staff.

Fleet 'champions' have been

introduced in its service departments and call centre aimed at improving customers' 'in life' vehicle ownership.

Throughout lockdowns, technicians, parts and ramps were available to keep key workers' vehicles on the road. Covid-safe collection and delivery practices were introduced, along with virtual appointments with master technicians – and unlimited free use of EV charging stations was available to key workers at any of Johnsons' 51 sites.

Despite the pandemic, develop-

ment of a 10-acre fleet preparation centre continued. It opened in June and is equipped with multi-fuelling capacity, smart repair, corporate customer hosting facilities, vehicle demo areas, more than 40 fast charging stations and the capacity to accommodate 15,000-plus vehicles per year.

It's no surprise, therefore, that 99.1% of customers scored Johnsons Fleet Services nine- or 10-out-of-10 in satisfaction surveys, attesting to the business's 'investment in growth without compromise' value.

FINALISTS

- Garland Motors
- Johnsons Fleet Services

- TrustFord
- Vindis Group Fleet

MERCEDES-BENZ C-CLASS

Fifth generation C-Class packs in all the latest technology

By Matt de Prez

It usually takes a few years for all the new gadgets and gizmos from a manufacturer's flagship model to filter down the range, but Mercedes-Benz has decided to do things slightly differently with its new C-Class which arrives in the UK later this year.

Now in its fifth generation, the compact executive has borrowed more than just looks from its bigger brother the S-Class, packing in the very latest technology from the Stuttgart brand.

It's on the inside where the biggest changes are apparent. The C-Class comes equipped with MBUX 2 – that's the newest version of Mercedes' infotainment system. The brand says it elevates the car to new levels of connectivity.

A central 11.9-inch touchscreen becomes the main control centre. It's angled towards the driver and follows the gradient of the dashboard, meaning it feels as natural to use as regular switchgear.

There's more than one way to operate the new system, however. Those familiar with current Mercedes models such as the A-Class will be aware of the "Hey Mercedes" voice control system, which in this latest iteration is connected to the



Touchscreen is angled towards the driver

internet so it has a broader range of abilities. Think of it like having Amazon's Alexa in your car.

We're usually fans of in-car systems that retain some form of physical controller, such as BMW's iDrive, but this new MBUX 2 system is the first fully touchscreen interface that has truly impressed.

Mercedes has moved away from its retro-style interior in this new generation and, overall, the C-Class's cabin feels more spacious and less drab than before. It's now the sector benchmark, in our opinion. Material quality is top-notch and we can't dispute the comfort of the seats after a couple of hours behind the wheel.

While the underpinnings and powertrains for the new model are largely lifted from the current C-Class, Mercedes says it has vastly overhauled the whole car.

The changes are noticeable in the way the car drives. It feels more dynamic than any non-AMG Mercedes we've driven and manages to deliver an equally impressive ride.

Before we get too carried away, there is one caveat. The car we've tested is a German-spec left

hooker which was equipped with adaptive dampers and rear-wheel steering. It's unlikely these options will be offered on UK-spec cars, but we're confident the car will at least exceed the current model's driving dynamics.

From launch the mild-hybrid C 220 d will be the most attractive fleet model, with 200PS and CO₂ emissions from 130g/km. Later in the year the C 300 e and C 300 de plug-in hybrids will take over as key fleet models, with the promise of up to 62 miles of zero-emission range.

Alongside the saloon, which we've tested here, will be an estate with 30 litres extra luggage space.

Pricing and UK specifications won't be released until the end of this month (July), but we'd expect a slight uplift on the outgoing car's £34,015 starting price (P11D) to around £35,000 for the saloon and £38,000 for the estate.

We're looking forward to putting the new C-Class through its paces when it arrives in the UK this summer and, based on this first drive, we think it might just be good enough to threaten the BMW 3 Series in this sector.

“WE THINK IT (THE C-CLASS) MIGHT JUST BE GOOD ENOUGH TO THREATEN THE BMW 3 SERIES IN THIS SECTOR”



NISSAN QASHQAI

Third-generation crossover pioneer carries the weight of expectation for this type of car

By Matt de Prez

All eyes are on Nissan. As the self-proclaimed creator of the crossover segment, the introduction of the third-generation Qashqai is a major milestone – not only for the brand, but for the success of the car type as a whole.

Crossovers are everywhere these days and the Qashqai is the UK's favourite. We've been lapping up the Sunderland-built model since 2007, with just as many registered to company fleets as private individuals.

This third-generation model promises better efficiency, more technology and improved drivability. While it takes on a new, more futuristic look, the core elements of the old model remain.

At its heart, the new Qashqai is a sensible, safe and reasonably nimble family SUV.

Practicality is boosted by thoughtful features such as new hinges for the back doors that allow them to open up to 85 degrees, facilitating the fitment and



The infotainment system has been upgraded in the latest Qashqai

FLEET PICK NISSAN QASHQAI DIGT 140 N-CONNECTA

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£28,030
Monthly BIK (20%)	32%/£150
Class 1A NIC	£1,238
Annual VED	£220 then £155
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,546/30.5%
Fuel cost (ppm)	13
AFR (ppm)	11
Running cost (4yr/80k)	42ppm
CO ₂ (g/km)	144
Mpg	43.5

removal of baby seats. The boot is also bigger, up to 504 litres, and comes with a moveable floor.

One of the big changes is the introduction of a new e-Power hybrid system. Driven by an electric motor, it uses a petrol engine to keep the battery charged. This won't arrive until next year, however.

For now, there's just two powertrains on offer. Both are based around an updated mild-hybrid version of the outgoing model's 1.3-litre turbo-charged petrol engine, offering 138PS or 156PS. Either can be paired with a six-speed manual, while the latter can be matched with an automatic and all-wheel drive.

CO₂ emissions start from 143g/km, which puts it on the back foot compared with other segment models offering plug-in hybrid options.

We've tested both the manual and the Xtronic automatic, although only the more potent engine option was available at the launch. We doubt the extra 18PS makes a noticeable difference.

Significant enhancements have been applied to the car's chassis and suspension to deliver a more engaging drive. Agility is noticeably improved, but

not segment-leading. Nissan engineers have also fiddled with the steering and it's now super sharp. In fact, it's almost too quick and can impact the otherwise relaxing nature of the drive.

The manual gearbox also detracts from the driving experience. It's a little vague and imprecise when paired with the car's springy clutch. Opting for the Xtronic is a better bet. It's a CVT, but you'd never tell. The calibration is excellent and the car behaves like a normal auto. It also feels much livelier when you step on the accelerator.

Our testing netted an average fuel consumption of 42mpg in the manual and 40mpg in the Xtronic. Not bad, considering a lot of our route was in town. The official figure is close to 44mpg.

A noticeable change on the inside is the uplift in material quality. The interior feels a lot more upmarket than that of the old car and there's a welcome infotainment system upgrade too.

While the entry-level car does without a touch-screen, opting for mid-grade N-Connecta or above gets a nine-inch central display and a crisp digital instrument cluster.

ŠKODA ENYAQ IV

BEV latecomer has been worth the wait

By Andrew Ryan

It may be relatively late to the battery electric vehicle (BEV) party, but Škoda has made its entrance in style with the Enyaq iV.

The SUV joins plug-in hybrid versions of its Superb and Octavia models in the manufacturer's iV electric vehicle sub-brand, with the latter highly-commended in the Best Plug-in Hybrid Car category in this year's Fleet News Awards (see page 71).

The Enyaq, too, should be a success with company car drivers by offering the family-friendly practicality for which Škoda has become known in an SUV package, as well as the 1% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rate for zero-emission vehicles.

About the same size as the Octavia, it offers oodles of interior space: there's plenty of head- and leg-room both front and rear, while the boot is a vast 585 litres.

FLEET PICK ENYAQ iV 80 LOUNGE

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£40,435
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£7
Class 1A NIC	£56
Annual VED	£0 then £0
RV (4yr/80k)	£14,264/35%
Fuel cost (ppm)	3.86
AER (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	40.27ppm
CO ₂ (g/km)	0
Mpg (miles)	333

Enyaq's driving range adds to its usability. It is available with two battery sizes, a 62kWh and 82kWh, and these are fitted, slightly confusingly, into the Enyaq iV60 and the Enyaq iV80 respectively.

The 60 has a WLTP combined range of 256 miles, with the 80 offering 333 miles. The 62kWh battery model has a 177PS motor, and the power output rises to 204PS for the 82kWh vehicles.

Both can charge at up to 11kW from an AC charger, meaning that a full charge from a 7.4kW wallbox will take either nine-and-a-half hours or 13 hours, dependent on the battery.

As standard, both battery sizes are fitted with an on-board 50kW DC charger, giving the 60 models a 0-80% charging time of 55 minutes. The 80 variants will take 70 minutes for the same charge.

The 60 can be specified with an optional 100kW charger for £440, cutting this time to 35 minutes, while the 80 is available with a 125kW onboard unit. This means the same charge takes 38 minutes.

Enyaq is available in six interior specifications – Loft, Lodge, Lounge, Suite, EcoSuite and SportLine – which differ in terms of upholstery, decorative trim and dashboard materials to deliver a different feel.

A number of option packs can then be specified to enhance equipment levels, covering areas such as comfort, convenience and safety.

Whatever the trim level selected, the interior is dominated by a 13-inch touchscreen, while standard equipment across all models includes sat-nav, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, LED headlights, autonomous emergency braking, cruise control, parking sensors, climate control and Keyless Go.

P11D prices start from £34,440 for the Enyaq iV 60 Loft, rising to £42,845 for the range-topping 80 SportLine.



A 13-inch touchscreen dominates the interior

We drove the Enyaq iV 60 Loft, 80 Loft and 80 Suite models and the quality of cabin build and materials used was consistently high throughout the range.

The 80 models are, unsurprisingly, the quickest, but only by a tiny margin: according to Škoda, they take 8.2 seconds on the 0-62mph sprint, just 0.2 seconds less than the 60's time.

Based on the Volkswagen Group's MEB platform, on the road the Enyaq provides plenty of comfort and, despite its bulky 2.5-tonne weight, handles well, partly due to having a low centre of gravity as the battery is mounted low down in the floor.

How it drives is unlikely to be a major factor for someone looking for an electric SUV, with practicality and low BIK tax much higher priorities, but it is the icing on the cake of what is an impressive overall package.

AUDI Q5 SPORTBACK



Roof height only differs by 2mm compared with the standard model

Sportback shapes up well, but there are reservations about whether the coupé look is worth considerable price premium

By Matt de Prez

It seems a bit preposterous that Audi is charging almost £2,500 more for what is, essentially, a Q5 with a bit chopped off the back. But, such is the demand for coupé-style SUVs these days, demand for the Sportback model is expected to make up around a quarter of Q5 sales.

The raked back end gives the car a sportier look and, much like the e-Tron Sportback and the Q3 Sportback, this is really an aesthetic choice.

There's only a 2mm difference in roof height, meaning the new model sacrifices little in terms of passenger space.

Of course, the boot is a tad smaller – but only by some 40 litres. Overall luggage space is, therefore, comparable to an Audi A4 Avant.

The powertrain choice includes a 265PS mild-hybrid petrol and a 204PS diesel, plus a pair of plug-in hybrids. All versions have all-wheel drive.

Drivers will likely be drawn to the plug-in models, offering fruity performance with either 299PS or



367PS along with benefit-in-kind (BIK) of 11%. Stepping into these comes at a price, however. The cheapest TFSI e is £55,380, making it £10,000 more than a BMW 330e touring.

Compared with direct rivals – that's the BMW X4 and Mercedes-Benz GLC Coupe – the Q5 Sportback is, however, competitively priced and it offers the lowest BIK.

Driveability is defined by which trim level you choose. The entry-level Sport rides on the softest springs, while the S Line is fitted with sports suspension. Range-topping versions are equipped with air suspension.

We tested the S Line and were impressed by the car's agility. Despite being firmer, the ride isn't punishing and, considering this is the likely volume seller, it's probably the set-up that suits it best.

A recent facelift for the Q5 failed to see the introduction of Audi's latest twin-screen digital dashboard, as seen in the A6 and A8. Instead, it makes do with the older 'floating' touchscreen and physical climate control buttons.

While the set-up is beginning to feel dated in a premium car, the overall interior ambience is one of high quality. There's a satisfying feeling of solidity to everything, helping to justify the price.

It's a quality product that doesn't fail to impress, but drivers opting for a 'regular Q5' with a few more options may be equally satisfied.

FLEET PICK AUDI Q5 SPORTBACK 50 TFSI E S LINE

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£55,930
Monthly BIK (20%)	11%/£102
Class 1A NIC	£849
Annual VED	£0 then £480
RV (4yr/80k)	£20,537/37%
Fuel cost (ppm)	12
AFR (ppm)	13
Running cost (4yr/80k)	62
CO ₂ (g/km)	40
Mpg/EV range	166mpg/38 miles

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



Much has been said of late about traffic being back to pre-lockdown levels. Not sure how anyone can say this, or how they calculate it. The only

way to get some sort of accuracy is from fuel sales and with a Government department supplying the data.

During the first seven weeks of the initial lockdown, forecourt sales fell to 39% of a typical week. By mid-June 2021 sales were back up to 93% of sales, pre-March 23, 2021.

But, bear in mind, there are probably many more delivery van miles now that will be using more diesel. Also, there are more electric cars on the road compared with a year ago, using no fuel at all.

All that said, fuel sales are still lower, meaning fewer journeys and less petrol and diesel being used.

No room to move

I don't know if it's just around where I live, but so many cars and vans are parked on both sides of the road, leaving little room to get through and no room at all for emergency vehicles, or Morrison's home delivery vans (other supermarkets are available).

It's turning into an obstacle race to get anywhere. You have to dive into any available spaces to let oncoming vehicles pass, and if the car behind doesn't have a space, other cars coming the other way can't pass, and, in no time, you have gridlock and some very angry drivers.

When I push my year-old grandson around our village often there is a car parked on the pavement with no room for a pram. Too many cars, not enough space and too much on-road parking.

CCIA's return

It was good to be back at Millbrook Proving Ground for this year's Company Car in Action, after last year's event was cancelled, along with just about everything else.

Many manufacturers attended but a few were missing. Even so, there was no lack of fleet customers there – more than I had expected.

It was a relaxed day, with everyone following the rules.

Visitors were drooling over the array of Porsches. Toyota showed the Yaris Cross SUV, and Renault had a couple of the all-new Arkana left-hand drives available to drive. Polestar2 seemed to be attracting a lot of attention with all the test drive slots full.

Yet another well organised and professional event from the *Fleet News* team and much appreciated by attendees.



DS 9

Latest luxury offering from DS is all about comfort

By Matt de Prez

These days, luxury cars are largely defined by how sporty they are: the bigger the wheels and the harder the seats, the more desirable they seem.

If you look at the sales figures for any model in the executive car segment, sportier trim levels like BMW's M Sport and Audi's S Line dominate.

But, if you think about it, that doesn't make any sense. Cars in this segment are typically driven by people who spend the majority of their time on the motorway, or battling with urban obstacles like potholes and speed bumps.

DS has taken a different approach with its new flagship model, which is based on an extended version of the platform that underpins the Peugeot 508 to create a 5 Series-sized saloon that offers a high degree of comfort and luxury.

Maybe you're thinking "what's the point?". Well, DS isn't expecting to steal thousands of drivers from its German counterparts. In fact, it expects to shift only a "couple of hundred" DS 9s each year



The interior provides a calming and relaxed environment

– 80% of which will go to fleets. This is, therefore, a rather unique and exclusive offering.

Of course, buried under that beautiful body and high-quality leather is just a bunch of bits from existing Peugeot and Citroën models – including its engines. But then, if you delve below the surface of a Bentley you'll find parts marked "VW".

The DS 9 is available with two flavours of the Stellantis group's plug-in hybrid system: the 225PS front-wheel drive set-up and a new 360PS all-wheel drive version, both badged E-Tense. There is also a regular 225PS petrol engine, but it's not particularly benefit-in-kind (BIK) friendly.

With partial electric power, the DS 9 does the 'luxury' thing best. Setting off in silence, it offers a usable amount of power and zero-emission range.

We're used to this powertrain now and its foibles are just as apparent in the DS 9 as they are in other applications. It's mainly the fault of the eight-speed automatic gearbox, which quite often hesitates when you call for more power. The engine note at full chat is also a little out-of-character for a car of this size and price. It's not all bad though. The DS

9 E-Tense is remarkably efficient, returning more than 70mpg during our varied test route, and emitting just 35g/km of CO₂.

The chassis isn't set up to be a car for keen drivers, despite having a clever suspension system that can adapt to the road ahead using a camera. It's all about comfort and, on that front, things are positive. Once you sink into the leather-clad cabin and take in the array of acutely sculpted details like the pressed metal trim pieces and pearl-stitched upholstery, you just want a calm and relaxed drive.

Wind and road noise is noticeably absent, thanks to some enhanced sound proofing and ultra-thick glass. There is also a brilliant Focal sound system.

At almost £50,000, the 225PS plug-in hybrid Rivoli model we tested sounds a tad expensive for a big French car, but when you run the numbers against a similarly specified Audi or BMW, the DS makes sense.

The standard equipment list includes all the goodies that the German brands make you pay extra for, including ventilated massage seats, a panoramic sunroof and 360-degree cameras.

FLEET PICK DS 9 PHEV 225 RIVOLI+

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£49,145
Monthly BIK (20%)	11%/£90
Class 1A NIC	£746
Annual VED	£0 then £480
RV (4yr/80k)	£12,641/26%
Fuel cost (ppm)	9
AFR (ppm)	13
Running cost (4yr/80k)	60
CO ₂ (g/km)	34
Mpg/EV range	176mpg/33 miles

▶ SEAT LEON

1.4 E-HYBRID FR



By Gareth Roberts

The Seat Leon plug-in hybrid's appeal to the company car market is obvious, with the entry level FR trim putting it in a 7% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax banding for 2021/22.

It has a P11D price of £32,780 and, on paper, claims to deliver up to 40 miles of pure electric driving, thanks to its 1.4-litre petrol engine being supported by a 12.8kWh battery and 85kW e-motor.

It is worth noting, however, that the range-topping FR Sport and Xcellence Lux trims, with larger wheels, fall short of the 40-mile threshold for BIK purposes and will push the driver into a higher company car tax band.

After a few weeks on the *Fleet News* long-term test fleet, our FR entry-level version has, nevertheless, struggled to realise the claimed 40 miles in real-world driving conditions, with 30 miles of zero-emission driving currently the best return achieved.

The driver can choose to maintain the battery's state of charge, saving it for situations when zero tailpipe driving is required rather than deplete it unnecessarily.

It will also never discharge below a predefined (by the manufacturer) level, with the system switching back to hybrid mode.

Fully charging the Seat Leon plug-in hybrid can be done in as little as 3 hours 42 minutes using a 3.6kW AC fast charger, or around 6 hours using a 2.2kW charger.

It defaults to electric mode when started, if there is sufficient charge in the battery, but give it some throttle and the petrol engine will kick in to produce an overall output of 204PS (150kW) of power and 350Nm of torque.

Claimed fuel economy is 217-235mpg (WLTP) and, driven on a fully-charged battery at the start of every journey, it is possible to achieve some mind-boggling fuel economy figures in real-world driving conditions.

However, when the battery is depleted, while those three-figure fuel economy figures will disappear, it still achieves a respectable 49mpg.



▶ SUZUKI SWACE

HYBRID SZ5

By Jeremy Bennett

Suzuki brought a selection of its vehicles to our 'drive and decide' event, Company Car In Action, in June. I managed to talk to Lee Giddings, national fleet sales manager, as he oversaw the test drives of 15 brand cars – including two Swace – about the car's prospects in the fleet market.

Of the anticipated 2,000 UK sales in a full year, he is confident the "vast majority" will be sold to fleets.

"Our entire range is a perfect fit for fleets, whether that be public sector, salary sacrifice, SME and so on," Giddings said.

"But our most recent additions to the range in Swace and Across really are built for fleet, with full hybrid or PHEV respectively, low CO₂ and excellent BIK advantages. Furthermore, we can look forward to a new S-Cross coming soon."

The Swace is packed to the brim with advanced safety features, giving drivers peace of mind, including pre-collision system, lane tracking assist and road sign assist.

"The Swace meets multiple drivers needs in one unique and outstanding package," said Giddings.



▶ AUDI A3

40 TFSI E (204PS)

By Sarah Tooze

We pitted our Audi A3 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) against key rivals: the Mercedes-Benz A250e, Volkswagen Golf eHybrid and BMW 118i M Sport using the running cost calculator on the *Fleet News* website.

BMW doesn't offer a PHEV on the 1 Series and there's a significant difference in benefit-in-kind tax (BIK) between it and our A3 for the 20% taxpayer in England (£1,794 versus £496). However, it is worth considering because of pence per mile (ppm) costs.

Over four years and 80,000 miles, it has the lowest

figures for both depreciation (25.08ppm, followed by the A-Class at 28.37ppm, A3 at 29.03ppm and Golf at 30.52ppm) and service maintenance and repair (SMR) costs (3.61ppm compared with 3.62ppm for the Golf, 4.68ppm for the A3 and 5.16ppm for the A-Class).

Looking at Class 1A NIC, however, and the Golf is the best bet at £335 (£896 less than the 1 Series). This is closely followed by our A3 (£342) and the A-Class (£347).

For BIK, the Golf also takes the lead, costing the 20% taxpayer £486 – £10 less than the A3 (£496).



▶ MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

By Andrew Ryan

Switching into our fully-electric Mazda MX-30 has made me think about journeys differently.

When I've been running a conventional ICE vehicle or a plug-in hybrid, I've been able to just jump in the car and drive, knowing that if I need to refuel, it's just a five-minute task at a filling station.

Now I'm in a battery electric vehicle (BEV) with a range of 124 miles, it's become more complicated.

My first instinct now before a journey is to look on Google Maps to see how far I need to go and, if it is more than a 100 mile-round trip, then at Zap-Map

to see where the suitable rapid charge points are.

My longest trip in the MX-30 so far has been from my Norfolk home down to a hotel near Slough – 106 miles away – for a work event.

Limited space does not allow me to give all the detail (see url, top right) but one thing I did discover is that charging at a rapid charger means it costs about the same to 'fuel' an electric vehicle as it does a diesel model, eradicating one of the oft-cited benefits of running BEVs: a factor worth considering for fleet decision-makers when making total cost of ownership (TCO) calculations for individual drivers.



▶ FORD TRANSIT

CUSTOM TRAIL 300 L1H1 DOUBLE-CAB-IN-VAN 2.0 ECOBLUE

By Trevor Gehlcken

Over the years it has been a pleasure to watch as the LCV manufacturers have gradually realised that van drivers deserve all the creature comforts of their car counterparts and have acted accordingly.

Our long termers, the Ford Transit Custom Trail, is simply dripping with useful goodies – and I don't necessarily mean expensive stuff.

For example, most mid-sized vans with three seats up front still come with only two coffee cup holders whereas our van has a third pull-out one in the middle of the dash. Curiously enough when

empty, it also fits my iPhone to a tee – I wonder if that was intentional?

Both sun visors have a vanity mirror attached – something rarely seen in commercial vehicles.

Meanwhile, the three passenger seats in the rear are served with two extra interior lights. There's also a spare cigar lighter socket and USB port up on top the dash so I can plug in my own sat-nav unit and/or mobile phone without having wires trailing.

I also like the little icon next to the digital speedometer which tells me what the speed limit is at any given time.

▶ VOLVO XC40

T4 R DESIGN



By Mike Roberts

If it's practicality you want from your company vehicle, then the Volvo XC40 has it in spades.

From door cubby holes that hold a two-litre bottle to a boot lid that opens with a swipe of a foot underneath the bumper (part of an added option package), you'll not want for anything.

Seat back netting is provided for rear passengers, there are sockets to charge your smartphone, as well as a wireless charging pad in the front console, plenty of little storage spaces for your bits and pieces and the elasticated side straps in the boot to hold bags in place are a nice addition too.

As is a hook in the glovebox that will prevent your takeaway bag from toppling over.

Boot space is ample – 452 litres, increasing to 1,328 litres with the rear seats down.

An attempt to use the voice-activated control system met with limited success (I could neither change the interior temperature nor launch Spotify) so more practice is required. It's relatively simple to peruse apps on the infotainment system with just a few swipes.

Parking the Volvo is stress-free, thanks to both front and rear parking sensors and, on our model, a rear camera – a useful tool.

On extreme weather days it's possible to warm or cool the car (with sufficient battery charge) via a smartphone app. The intuitive app can also lock and unlock the car, check fuel levels, and see how many miles it's accrued when on charge – handy when monitoring a charge away from home.

As you'd expect, the XC40 comes with a raft of class-leading safety systems as standard, including a camera and radar system that can warn the driver of an imminent low-speed front collision with a pedestrian, cyclist or another vehicle before automatically applying the brakes.

The more time spent with the XC40, the more it impresses, both on motorway journeys and pootling around the local country roads. I'll cover the car's driveability in a future report.



▶ VW GOLF

GTE 1.4 TSI PHEV



By Matt de Prez

I was very complimentary of the new eighth-generation Golf when I first drove it almost two years ago. It was the first Golf in a long time that aimed to move the game on somewhat, by introducing new technology and showcasing the VW Group's new MQB Evo platform.

We've since seen the introduction of the Audi A3, Seat Leon and Škoda Octavia, all using the same underpinnings, and our impressions of the Golf started to wane. Seat offered a more exciting drive and Škoda a more practical and refined package, for less money.

As the Golf range has grown, with models like our GTE and the recently announced eHybrid version, the scales are starting to tip back in the Golf's favour. It offers the broadest model lineup, the strongest residuals and, to coin a cliché, it's simply the best all-rounder.

One of the key elements of this new Golf is the digital cockpit. It does away with switches and knobs, instead utilising a central touchscreen for all the car's functions. As a result the dashboard is much cleaner and more driver focused than before.

It takes a bit of getting used to and, for a first-time user at least, the systems can be a little frustrating. But, like all pieces of technology, once you've got the hang of it, then it all becomes rather straightforward.

The voice control system is particularly useful and can be used for a number of key functions. It responds to phrases like "I'm cold" or "take me home", which reduces the need to prod at the screen.

Volkswagen is rolling the new system out across its models, with the ID3 and ID4 the latest to benefit. Connectivity plays a major part in its operation, enabling users to perform software updates over the air and also download additional features to the car where the hardware already exists, like automatic high beam control. There's also a car-to-x function, meaning compatible models can provide warnings about collisions or traffic jams to each other.



▶ ŠKODA OCTAVIA FINAL TEST

SE TECHNOLOGY ESTATE 1.5 TSI

By Luke Neal

How can I help? It's a phrase you may become accustomed to if you choose to use Škoda's on-board personal assistant, Laura. Saying 'Ok Laura' gives you voice-command access to phone functions, infotainment (including navigation) and some car functions without taking your hands off the wheel or your eyes off the road.

Laura can dial or text your contacts, search and play music and control car functions like air conditioning or heated seats. You'll need to spend some time familiarising yourself with the phrases

that Laura understands though postcodes seem to be a no go and asking her to turn on the heated seats actually increases the driver's side air temperature, however if you say 'my bum is cold' the heated seats come on!

During the past six months we have enjoyed the Octavia's clever features, cabin space and refinement out on the road from the gutsy 150PS 1.5-litre petrol engine, which switches seamlessly between four- and two-cylinders when under minimal strain. The fuel economy has been a reasonable, but not outstanding, 43mpg.



▶ BMW 530E FINAL TEST

XDRIVE M SPORT SALOON

By Stephen Briers

We're changing tack for our farewell review of the BMW 530e plug-in hybrid. Previous reviews have focused on the electric range, fuel performance and related costs, often comparing the car to its diesel or petrol alternatives.

But here, we're going to ignore the engine and focus on our other likes (and the odd quibble).

The 5 Series is one of BMW's best-looking models. Dressed in 'Phytonic Blue' with black radiator grille, it is far more imposing than its chrome siblings.

The interior is ergonomic and high quality, with

comfortable seats and supportive head rests, plenty of elbow and head space, premium materials, trendy ambient lighting in a rainbow choice of colours, and stylish layout with the right blend of design and function.

However, the lines on the sat-nav aren't the easiest to distinguish – the green route line can sometimes blend in with other roads.

In summary (extended review online): the 5 Series is our pick of the executive cars from both a fleet and driver perspective – a view underlined by retaining its crown in the Fleet News Awards (see page 77).

MEET THE SUPPLIER HALFORDS



PETE MARDEN,
FLEET DIRECTOR,
HALFORDS AUTOCENTRE

BIO

HOBBY: CLASSIC CARS
(AND FIXING THEM)
DRIVES: TESLA M3P /
TVR TUSCAN
LIKES: CITY BREAKS
WITH THE FAMILY
FAVOURITE SONG:
CALIFORNICATION
(RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS)
FAVOURITE FOOD: CHINESE

WHAT'S YOUR ROLE AT HALFORDS?

I'm Halfords' fleet director, with responsibility for our business accounts across both Halfords' Autocentres as well as the McConechy network.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC?

When the pandemic hit, Halfords took an active decision to keep our garages and stores open. As an essential retailer, we were responsible for ensuring many key workers could continue their essential journeys with minimal disruption.

HOW DID YOU RESPOND?

From the start, we ensured that we had colleagues' buy-in and have consistently placed an emphasis on their safety – and they've been working tirelessly throughout. In addition to installing cleansing

stations, we've provided remote training sessions about sanitising customers' cars.

A huge proportion of the work we undertake for fleets is on a collection-and-delivery basis and we quickly ordered more pool cars to keep up with increased demand.

Our mobile division – Halfords' Mobile Expert – has also boomed over the past year as an ever-increasing number of fleet drivers discover how convenient this service is. We've already grown the number of vans we operate from 80 to 130 to accommodate this.

WHAT DOES HALFORDS DO FOR LARGE FLEETS WHEN IT COMES TO SERVICE, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR (SMR) WORK?

Halfords is a SMR specialist – and not a fast-fit – and we have the size and scale to cater for large fleets. We invest in the right equipment and pride ourselves on the quality service we provide. All our technicians are trained to the highest standards and possess an IMI Level 2 certificates in automotive maintenance as standard.

“We invest in the right equipment and pride ourselves on the quality service we provide. All technicians are trained to the highest standards”

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO EXTEND YOUR SMR SERVICE FOR FLEETS IN THE FUTURE?

Halfords currently operates 370 Autocentres nationwide and we've every intention of growing further. Similarly, Halfords Mobile Expert currently has 130 vans and we expect this number to increase drastically too. In short, we want to ensure that every corner of the country can enjoy our full range of services.

ARE LCVs A GROWING MARKET FOR HALFORDS?

Halfords has the largest independent LCV-capable network in the UK. It's a huge growth area for us – 180 of our centres are able to work on LCVs with up to five-tonne capability, meaning that they can handle long wheelbase vans. What's more, more than 80 of our centres can now carry out Class 7 MOT testing.

HOW ARE YOU PREPARING FOR EVs?

Over the course of the next year, Halfords will have an EV-qualified technician in every one of our Autocentres in response to the constantly increasing popularity of these vehicles. Our technicians have traditionally undertaken the IMI Level 2 Award in Hybrid Electric Vehicle Operation and Maintenance and we're now complementing this with the IMI Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement.

Basically, this means that they're at the top of their game in all matters related to EVs and hybrids. We're also a founding member of the IMI Techsafe working group which ensures technicians meet the strictest set of EV professional standards.

CommercialFleet



Award-winning Volvo puts focus on gas and electric

LNG due in Q3, while electric range to grow in 2022, says UK MD Christian Coolsaet

PLUS: LONGER HOURS NOT THE SOLUTION TO DRIVER SHORTAGES • USED VAN/TRUCK VALUES SOAR • DAF XF AND XG

Relaxation of drivers' hours is not solution

Call for short-term visa scheme for foreign lorry drivers required to plug the shortfall

By Gareth Roberts

The commercial fleet industry is calling for drivers to be added to the so-called Shortage Occupations list after criticising changes to drivers' hours rules.

The Government has announced a temporary relaxation of the retained EU drivers' hours rules in England, Scotland and Wales until August 8.

The Department for Transport (DfT) said the relaxation of the rules reflected the "exceptional circumstances" stemming from a shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers causing "acute supply chain pressures" (commercialfleet.org, July 8).

However, the move has been slammed on safety grounds, with James Firth, Logistics UK's head of road freight regulation policy, saying it will heap more pressure on drivers already stretched to the limit.

He accused the Government of ignoring the industry in deciding to relax drivers' hours rules, with the measure leaving "hard-pressed HGV drivers... to carry the burden".

"Throughout the pandemic, the

UK's professional drivers have kept our shops, homes and businesses supplied with everything needed to keep the economy going, but the current workforce cannot be expected to fill gaps created by the current skills shortage," he added.

"The road freight industry has vehemently opposed the extension of these vital road safety laws, yet the Government has ignored the will of those who will be most affected by the changes."

Richard Burnett, chief executive of the Road Haulage Association (RHA), also believes the extension of drivers' hours makes the job "less attractive", when the industry is trying to attract new recruits.

He explained: "Loading more hours on to drivers that are already exhausted is not the answer – the problem needs more than just a sticking plaster."

"Ministers should be mindful that road safety is the reason HGV drivers' hours are limited."

DRIVER HOURS' RULES CHANGED

The EU drivers' hours rules changes allow for the replacement of either: the permitted increase to the daily driving limit from nine hours to 10 with one of 11 hours (allowed up to twice in one week); or the requirement to take a regular weekly rest period of 45 hours in a two-week period, with an alternative pattern of weekly rest periods and an increase to the fortnightly driving limit from 90 hours to 99, enabling two consecutive reduced weekly rest periods to be taken.

The alternative pattern of weekly rest periods for drivers using the relaxation related to weekly rest periods allows the regular weekly rest period in a two-week period to be replaced by two reduced weekly rest periods of at least 24 hours.

Following this, two regular weekly rest periods must be taken, says the DfT. However, any reduction in



Allowing the daily driver limit to be increased temporarily could pile even more pressure on already-tired drivers

weekly rest shall be compensated for in the normal way by an equivalent period of rest taken before the end of the third week following the week in question.

In addition, any rest taken as compensation for a reduced weekly rest period shall be attached to a regular weekly rest period of at least 45 hours (which can be split over two regular weekly rest periods), it says.

This relaxation must not be used in combination with existing rules for international driving, which allow for two consecutive reduced weekly rest breaks in certain circumstances. It is not recommended this relaxation be used for drivers engaged partly in international journeys.

SHORTFALL IN DRIVERS

Firth said: "The logistics sector has been experiencing a significant shortage of drivers for a number of

years, but this situation has been exacerbated by factors including the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit, which has seen many EU workers return to their home countries.

"The industry needs a longer-term solution to the recruitment of drivers – including temporary visas for EU workers to cover the gaps while new recruits can be trained, and interest-free loans for those wishing to enter the market – not a stop-gap measure that will heap more pressure on existing workers.

"The relaxation of drivers' hours should only be used in an emergency, when a foreseeable end date can be identified or is the Government suggesting that the current shortage of drivers will be resolved by August 8?"

Before the pandemic and Brexit, logistics was already experiencing a shortage of around 76,000 drivers,



THE PROBLEM NEEDS MORE THAN JUST A STICKING PLASTER

RICHARD BURNETT, RHA



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's



Impressed by Toyota

I met up with Toyota recently to drive a selection of its LCVs. Proace City, Proace, e-Proace, Hilux Invincible 2.8D-4D and the Land Cruiser SWB van

all came under scrutiny and passed with flying colours. I was particularly impressed with the e-Proace van. It was smooth and intuitive to drive, comes with fast-charging capabilities and a range of 200-plus miles. The drive was organised to emphasise the strength of the Toyota Professional range and coincide with the launch of the Toyota Relax warranty. Any new or used Toyota product up to 10 years old or 100,000 miles is eligible, if serviced regularly at a Toyota dealership.

Off-roading with Iveco

I have driven many off-road courses in my time at Glass's, but few have been in a seven-tonne 4x4 long wheelbase extra-high roof van. So, when the invitation came from Iveco to drive its 4x4 Daily 70C18HA8 4175 H3 Hi-Matic at Millbrook Proving Ground, it was too good an offer to turn down. It was a great experience over daunting terrain. The Daily is tough and really was in its element, coping with every incline, ridge and water-filled ditch. I also got to drive the Daily 35S14 Snoeks Crew van and have an early preview of the facelifted Daily due for launch later this year.

An all-new electric Arrival

Had a long call with Arrival to discuss its plans for an all-new electric van. Revolutionary design will see van and chassis variants built with embedded connectivity. A much lighter aluminium frame and thermoplastic-composite panels will give a much lower total cost of ownership. It will have a range of up to 215 miles and payloads nearing 2,000kg. Vehicles will be able to receive software updates and, in the future, potentially change the battery to match second life operator requirements. The 3.5t-4.25t van is due to launch in the second half of 2022.

Hydrogen vans by the end of the year

The Stellantis Group and Groupe Renault expect to have production hydrogen fuel cell electric vans available from the end of this year, with right-hand drive versions likely in 2022. Despite the heavy focus on battery electric vans, hydrogen is quietly gaining momentum. A hydrogen tank takes three minutes to refuel and has a 300-mile range.

Glass's

Part of Autovista Group

and Logistics UK now estimates the shortfall to be approximately 90,000 drivers.

Compared with 2019, there were 43% fewer tests conducted in 2020, with 35% of these in the first quarter (January to March), when fewer than 15,000 tests were carried out, prior to the advent of the pandemic (commercialfleet.org, July 8).

However, 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.

TEMPORARY WORKER VISAS

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the RHA has called on the Government to take action before the crisis gets worse.

The letter, which was signed

by 22 business leaders, representing producers and distributors, and the wider logistics sector, includes a request for the introduction of a temporary worker visa for HGV drivers and for this occupation to be added to the Home Office Shortage Occupation List.

Rob Wright, executive director of international supply chain and logistics consultancy Scala, said: "Driver shortages are a problem the Government should have foreseen, given that there has been a UK driver shortage for more than 10 years, largely filled by EU and Eastern European drivers.

"This shortage is an early test of the Government post-Brexit immigration policies, which prioritise high-skilled immigration as there are significant

doubts that domestic recruitment could fill the gaps in the short term."

The Home Office says that there are no plans to introduce the visas, while transport minister Baroness Vere said she had discussed this issue with the haulage sector two years ago, adding: "It was very clear then that foreign labour would not be available to it."

The Government says it has "already taken action on driver shortages, including ramping up vocational test capacity, and funding apprenticeships".

"Most of the solutions, however, are likely to be driven by industry, with progress already being made in testing and hiring, and a big push towards improving pay, working conditions and diversity," it added.

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ADVICE LINE


By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q We are looking to take on a driver but their licence shows a code 70(F) on the rear. What does this mean?

A This means that the licence has been exchanged for a UK one. In the case above, this means the licence was issued originally in France.



ISTOCK/RONNIECHUA



Q We have a yardman at one of our depots who has a C1 with grandfather rights but no Driver CPC card. What does he need to do to get a DQC card so he is able to drive a 7.5t lorry?

A The driver CPC qualification is linked to the driver's licence number, so drivers returning to the industry, or drivers who have acquired rights, can either do Modules 2 & 4, or the full 35 hours of periodic training – they have the choice. Modules 2 & 4 are only available to drivers who are seeking their first Driver Qualification Card, so cannot be used again.

ISTOCK/MTREASURE

E10 petrol to be introduced across the UK this summer

Operators of petrol-fuelled vehicles should be aware that the standard petrol grade, currently labelled 95 Octane or 'Premium' grade, will increase in renewable ethanol content and become E10 this September across most of the UK.

E10 petrol will contain up to 10% renewable ethanol – twice the amount currently used in standard petrol – and is compatible with almost all (95%) petrol-powered vehicles on the road today. The 5% version will become E5 or 'Super' grade.

Vehicles not able to use E10 can continue to use E5, which will still be available at most filling stations.

While the changes will reduce CO₂ emissions, they will not affect a vehicle's Euro emissions standard or compliance standards for entering a clean air zone (CAZ), low emission zone (LEZ) or ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ).

Note, the change in fuel only applies to petrol; diesel fuel will not be affected.

EMISSIONS AND AIR QUALITY

The main benefit of E10 petrol is it

reduces overall levels of CO₂-based vehicle emissions. By blending the fuel with up to 10% renewable ethanol, less fossil fuel is needed, helping to protect the environment and meet climate change targets.

Its introduction at UK forecourts could cut transport CO₂ emissions by 750,000 tonnes a year – the equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the road, or all the cars in North Yorkshire.

Producing ethanol also results in valuable by-products, including animal feed and stored CO₂.

FUEL ECONOMY

Using E10 petrol can reduce fuel economy (the number of miles you are able to drive on a gallon of fuel)

slightly. You may see around a 1% reduction, which is unlikely to be noticeable in everyday driving.

Other factors, such as your driving style, driving with under-inflated tyres or the fitment of a roof rack, have a much more significant impact on fuel economy.

COMPATIBILITY

While almost all petrol-powered vehicles on the road are compatible with E10 petrol, the following vehicles may not be:

- Classic, cherished or older vehicles.
- Some specific models, particularly those from the early 2000s.
- Some mopeds, particularly those with an engine size of 50cc or less.



ISTOCK/ NDSUA

Volvo steps on the (liquefied natural) gas to cure diesel woes

LNG models advance to help fill the gaps left by diesel delivery delays. *John Lewis* reports

Long waits for deliveries of new commercial vehicles to customers thanks, in part, to shortages of key components are bedeviling manufacturers at present. Volvo Trucks is no exception.

The majority of models in its latest line-up will not arrive with British customers until sometime during the first quarter of 2022 admits Christian Coolsaet, managing director of the company's UK and Ireland operation.

"That's the hard reality," he says. "We can't get the semiconductors we need and the car industry is in the same position."

The situation has been exacerbated by socially-distanced assembly plants that were shuttered for several months last year still playing catch-up as demand for vehicles rises. At least all manufacturers are in the same boat, and there is one crumb of comfort Coolsaet can offer.

While lead times for diesels are stretching for month after wearisome month, a difference in the sort of parts they rely on means new models powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG) looks set to arrive earlier. "We'll be able to deliver them during quarter three of this year," he promises.

Electric models are in similarly free supply.

The shortage of new trucks means fleets are hanging on to the vehicles they have already got until replacements arrive. As a consequence, the second-hand market is being starved of retailable stock, with an acute shortage of late year, low-mileage models.

Values are hardening in response, and used prices are rising.

PRODUCTION POSTPONED

Last year's coronavirus outbreak meant that production of the latest FH, FH16, FM and FMX was postponed by around six months. However, those months were not wasted, Coolsaet insists, and were used to tighten quality standards even further. "We spent them scrutinising every nut and bolt," he says.

A key advantage of the new range is enhanced fuel economy, he contends.

"The FH is, on average, 3% better on fuel than its predecessor," he claims. The improvement has been achieved thanks to a number of detailed software changes plus modifications to the cab's aerodynamics.

Driver comfort has not been neglected. "The FM's cab interior offers 1cu m more room than the previous cab had, with 300 litres of storage space," he says.

Once again, Volvo is placing heavy emphasis on safety systems.

For the FM, they include descent control, which sets a maximum speed to help prevent unwanted acceleration when going down a steep incline. We sampled it in both a FM 330 18-tonner and a FM 380 6x2 26-tonner and found it remarkably effective.

Adaptive cruise control now works at all speeds down to zero while Volvo Dynamic Steering, with lane-keeping assist and stability assist, is offered as an option.

Volvo is rolling out a suite of service contracts to support the newcomers with an increased emphasis on connectivity to spot problems before they evolve into something serious.

Returning to battery-powered models, the FL Electric and FE Electric are the first to appear, and an FL Electric 16-tonner has already gone into service with DHL in London.

"We should sell 700 electric trucks across Europe this year," says Coolsaet. "We're now



Christian Coolsaet is bullish, despite the problems posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and semiconductor shortages

away from volume production; if, indeed, they ever appear. Trucks powered by fuel cells could prove to be a viable alternative however, and Volvo has entered into a joint venture with Daimler to develop the technology.

"We could see Volvos with fuel cells fitted by 2024/25," says Coolsaet. The only emission they will produce will be water vapour.

In the meantime, LNG could be the answer for long-haul work, and more than 750 Volvos powered by the fuel are now in service. Volvo has ensured that 15 outlets spread UK-wide have the facilities necessary to support them, involving a £50,000-to-£100,000 investment in each location.

It believes that BioLNG will have a role to play for many years to come.

European Union rules will compel truck manufacturers to reduce the CO₂ output of new trucks by 15% on average from 2025 and by 30% from 2030 compared with 2019 levels. Volvo aims to achieve a 50% fall by 2030 with a 100% fossil-fuel-free line-up by 2040 (coinciding with the UK's planned ban on ICE trucks), with battery-electric and fuel cell-powered trucks achieving pre-eminence.

EMISSION-FREE

Come 2050, the Volvo parc will emit no CO₂ emissions at all, says the manufacturer.

"Electric trucks will account for 35% of our output by 2030," says Coolsaet. "Never forget that we have an obligation to future generations. We have to make this planet sustainable."

Volvo has a long-established pedigree when it comes to cutting emissions and its carbon footprint, he points out. Its Ghent, Belgium,

talking about ranges of up to 300km (186 miles) between recharges."

A battery-driven FH should arrive in 2022 with an electric FM scheduled for 2023. Volvo has recently announced a deal to buy 60% of Designwerk Group, he says. The Swiss engineering company specialises in building customised electric trucks under the Futuricum banner.

What Volvo is not doing, Coolsaet stresses, is selling an electric truck to a customer, then walking away. Support in terms of advice and the provision of the necessary infrastructure is vital.

"We employ specialists who will look at your routes and the charging arrangements you will need and tell you if using electric models is viable or not," he says.

The absence of exhaust emissions is not the only environmental advantage models such as the FE Electric enjoy, he points out. "There's the silence," he says; and low noise levels can make out-of-hours deliveries in urban areas more acceptable to city councils and local residents.

While ranges are improving, battery-driven 44-tonners capable of handling fully-laden triple-shifted intercity trunking work are still some years



assembly plant achieved CO₂-free production status as far back as 2007.

Not that this is stopping Volvo from continuing to offer one of the most powerful diesel trucks in production today.

Like the old model, the latest FH16 is available with up to 750PS on tap, and 750PS models account for around 100 sales a year in the UK.

Some operators want all that horsepower purely for the sake of the badge, and with an eye to retaining and recruiting drivers in a climate of continued shortage. Others who are involved in forestry and heavy haulage have a genuine need for the 3550Nm of torque that is on offer.

There are no plans to introduce a much-rumoured, 800PS FH16.

One way of addressing the driver shortage is to build trucks

capable of driving themselves, and Volvo has developed a prototype autonomous tractor unit.

"At the moment it is operating in a closed environment, with limited interactions with human beings, and we're still learning a lot from it," says Coolsaet. It has been on trial in Gothenburg, Sweden, transporting containers between a DFDS logistics centre and a container terminal under the watchful eye of a technician sitting in a control tower.

Volvo Group has set up Volvo Autonomous Solutions to accelerate the development, commercialisation and sales of autonomous vehicles. So far as investment is concerned, however, zero-emission technology looks set to keep taking the lion's share.

Says Coolsaet: "Sustainability is a higher priority than autonomy; and we're not under any legislative pressure to launch autonomous vehicles."



USED VALUES SOAR AS VAN AND TRUCK SHORTAGES CONTINUE

The pandemic and semiconductor supply issues have sent prices soaring. They have also had deeper impacts on the remarketing industry. *John Lewis* reports

A lack of key components such as semiconductors has led to a cut in commercial vehicle production. The shortfall, plus a boom in demand triggered by the home delivery explosion, means waiting lists for deliveries of some new vehicles are stretching into next year.

"Order a Eurocargo 18-tonner and we should be able to get it to you this year," says Iveco UK business line director, truck Gareth Lumsdaine.

"If you want an S-Way tractor unit, however, then you may have to wait until the first quarter of 2022," he adds.

Renault Trucks is citing 2022 delivery dates for certain models. So is Ford, which says that its bank of unfulfilled orders is bigger than it has ever been.

"Some truck manufacturers are now quoting quarter three or quarter four of next year for

deliveries," says Asset Alliance Group sales director James Jenkins. "I've worked in this industry for 25 years and have never seen anything like it."

In response, fleets are asking for leases to be extended until replacements for their existing vehicles arrive.

As a consequence, the latter are not being released onto the used market.

The resulting shortage means that used values are soaring.

Regional asset manager, UK, Ireland and export at Paccar Financial Europe Paul Young says: "Half of our leases are being extended at the request of customers."

Paccar is Daf's parent company, and the extensions tend to be for at least 12 months.

The upshot, he says, is that prices of used fleet-specification tractor units have gone up by between 10% and 15% while high-specification models have risen by closer to 20%.

"Demand is outstripping supply, and we're now getting to the stage where year-old tractor units are selling for the same price they were sold at when they were new," he adds.

"As for used rigids, nobody dares give a price on one," he adds. "They're petrified they'll end up under-selling it."

Shoreham Vehicle Auctions is seeing one-year-old Ford Transits fetch prices not far short of the cost of new ones.

To underline the rate at which used prices have rocketed, in 2019, Shoreham sold a 67-plate Renault Trafic with 30,000 miles on the clock for £9,000.

It resold the same vehicle this year, now with 53,000 miles recorded, for £11,600; an uplift of more than 28%, despite the fact that it was older and had a higher mileage.



Aston Barclay says that some fleets are increasing their replacement cycles from 24 months to 36

EXTENDING LEASES

Earlier this year Aston Barclay saw a major rental company due to dispose of 500 vans release less than 10% of that figure.

"Some fleets that were on a 24-month replacement cycle are replacing at 36 months instead," says Aston Barclay national light commercial vehicle manager Geoff Flood.

"On average, the vans we auction are four years old and have done 75,000 to 80,000 miles.

"Twenty-four months ago they were typically fetching £7,000 to £7,200. Today it's closer to £9,200 to £9,500, and the percentage sold is running at from 85% to 92% compared with 72% to 76% two years ago."

The used vehicle shortage is occurring at a time when demand is increasing sharply, due largely to the growing home delivery, courier and final-mile sectors.

Buyers who cannot obtain new models are opting to acquire used instead, a trend which is accelerating the price surge.

"With a lack of new product, franchised dealers are purchasing used vans to sell in record numbers, at a time when the number being wholesaled is down by 25% compared with pre-pandemic levels," says Cox Automotive customer strategy and insight director, commercial vehicles James Davis.

"Retailers are having to fight to secure stock as wholesale values rise month-on-month.

"Euro6 van values are up 22% year-on-year, ➔



JAMES DAVIS

Cox Automotive customer strategy and insight director James Davis sadly passed away shortly after this feature was written. Davis was a well-known and highly respected figure in the commercial vehicle sector and his knowledge is clearly displayed in this feature. Our thoughts are with his family, colleagues and friends.



Shoreham Vehicle Auctions
resold a Renault Trafic with an
uplift of 28% two years later

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Gary Sullivan,
managing director, Van Monster



Over the past 12 months, the world of remarketing has continued to evolve in line with both customer needs and the economic environment. With the current semiconductor

shortage, demand for LCVs is ever increasing, and remarketing will enable you to easily return cash into your business through the disposal of your older LCVs.

Traditional methods of LCV fleet disposal from part exchange to physical auctions have, in some instances, been replaced by online auctions where you can upload pictures of your vehicles from your premises and not have to move them until the keys are handed over to the trade buyer.

Of course, valuing vehicles for sale yourself may appear daunting, but by uploading photos, descriptions and details of any damage, your remarketing company should be in a position to help with a realistic valuation, starting price and reserve.

Some also offer a checklist such as Van Monster Remarketing's Assist40, for added peace of mind.

Whether you dispose of a handful of vehicles at a time, or large volumes, there is a solution to help you achieve the best return.

Online auctions, such as Van Monster Remarketing let you join one of their regular sales alongside ex-hire vehicles and other fleets – or you could have your own branded auction.

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Paccar Financial is seeing prices of used Daf tractor units rise by 10-20%

Asset Alliance says that some truck manufacturers are quoting deliveries for the second half of next year



and up 45% compared with 2019 levels."

At least some of the demand for Euro6 models is driven by firms needing to comply with tougher emissions restrictions being imposed by certain city councils; a trend which is affecting values of Euro5 and older vans.

"They've hit a price ceiling, but they are still significantly up compared with pre-pandemic levels," adds Davis.

But how soon will it be before the rise in used values begins to plateau, then decline?

"We believe that strong demand and pricing will be maintained into the first half of 2022, at which point it will gradually correct to pre-pandemic levels," says Dawsongroup Truck and Trailer head of remarketing James Hunter.



"I'VE WORKED IN THIS INDUSTRY FOR 25 YEARS AND HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT"

JAMES JENKINS, ASSET ALLIANCE

VARIETY OF CHANNELS

Auctions are by no means the only disposal route used by lessors, who employ a variety of channels to realise the best price.

Fraikin disposes of its time-served 3.5-tonners and trucks to traders, to export markets such as Poland, Malta and Cyprus, and from its own outlet at Garretts Green in Birmingham.

"We sell a lot through our website, and through Auto Trader too," says Fraikin strategic customer development director Colin Melvin.

The trucks that Paccar Financial gets back are usually offered to Daf dealers first so they can retail them.

When vans and trucks that have been subject to lease extensions eventually arrive on a more-stable market, vendors may find their age and mileage do not meet the requirements of prospective purchasers.

"The trouble is that hauliers buying used trucks all want one that has done no more than 300,000km (186,410 miles)," says Young. "That's the case even though their own vehicles may do at least 160,000km (100,000 miles) a year."

If there is any risk that a truck subject to a lease extension will end up being too old to appeal to buyers when disposal time rolls round, then Fraikin is taking it back by agreement, disposing of it and substituting a newer truck from its rental fleet instead.

The current scarcity of new vehicles coincides with a remarketing trend that has accelerated in the wake of restrictions on personal interaction imposed by the pandemic; a shift away from physical auctions to online bidding.

"Before the pandemic our van sales were 70% physical/30% online," says Flood.

"During the pandemic it was 100% online, and now the split is 60% online/40% physical."

Despite its growth, many industry figures doubt that online auctioning will completely replace physical auctions of vans and trucks.

Hunter says: "With the relaxation of restrictions there is a definite move in favour of re-establishing direct face-to-face contact between buyers and sellers."

Flood believes the social aspect of such sales should not be under-estimated, adding physical auctions can, in fact result in better prices for vendors. "We're typically getting £200 more for like-for-like vans in physical sales," he says.

DRIVING UP VALUES

Other industry executives argue that it is online selling that drives up values because it allows auctions to appeal to a wider audience.

"With used vehicles in short supply, buyers can log on to several auctions a day rather than drive to just one," says Davis.

"We've seen online buyer audiences double and sometimes triple at sales because they're getting access to more stock."

Some buyers are combining the physical and the virtual. They visit the auction prior to the sale, inspect the vehicles, then bid online rather than wait around in the auction hall.

Jenkins says used truck dealers themselves are increasingly selling online, providing detailed images of the vehicles they have in stock along with the specifications rather than expecting prospective purchasers to visit their site.

They can arrange delivery to locations all over the UK, with the customer able to reject the truck when it arrives if it is not as described.

The ease of being able to sell online may tempt some operators to remarket vehicles to retail buyers directly, cutting out the middle-man.

There are fleets that already have their own, well-established, sales operations. For example, light commercial rental giant Northgate has 16 used van outlets under the Van Monster banner.

Establishing an outlet from scratch remains a challenging undertaking however, warns Flood.

"What do you do if the customer comes back a few weeks later complaining that the van he has bought has an oil leak or the steering is creaking? Do you have the staff who can handle it?" he says.

DISPOSING OF DIESELS

Looking ahead, perhaps the biggest challenge remarketers will face over the next decade is disposing of diesel vehicles in a market that is going electric.

Davis is convinced there will be a strong market for used diesel vans and trucks for many years to come, regardless of tougher local emissions regulations.

Second-hand battery-powered versions of both will remain comparatively scarce, he suggests, with fleets deciding to keep them in service for longer, given the high front-end acquisition price; and conservative used buyers may be hesitant about acquiring them, anyway.

"They've always had diesels," he says. "That's what they're used to and they're still going to want them," he says.

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DAF XF AND XG

New Daf XF and all-new XG range set the standard thanks to the EU



The New Generation Daf trucks 2021. From left to right XG+, XG and XF

By Tim Campbell

Ever since the EU approved the extension of cab lengths to enable more aerodynamic cabs a couple of years ago the whole truck industry has been waiting for the first truck manufacturer to incorporate this into their design. In June, Daf Trucks became that manufacturer, and not only that, it will launch a whole new range.

Designated the XG and XG+ this whole new cab range will work alongside the newly named XF so Daf will, effectively, have two cabs available: the more traditional XF, which has been completely re-designed, and an all new 'extended' cab which is 490mm longer, 160mm at the front and 330mm at the rear, making the XG+ the largest internal cubic capacity tractor unit in Europe.

NEW GENERATION XF

The new generation XF features a new cab design with a 160mm elongation at the front and has a cab 75mm lower than the outgoing XF Super Space Cab and Space Cab. A main criticism of the old cab was the windscreen size and depth and this has been addressed with a larger curved screen and lower 'belt line'. Standing height in the new XF is between 1,900mm and 2,075mm, dependent on the position within the cab.

NEW GENERATION XG AND XG+

The big news from Daf is the launch of an all-new 'flagship' range, the XG and XG+, which has been designed to maximise the new EU mass and dimensions regulations. While the XF has the extra 160mm elongated front, the XG takes it to the next stage by adding an extra 330mm at the rear plus its cab sits 125mm higher. The XG+ is a slightly larger cab than the XG and its internal standing height is between 1,980mm to 2,220mm, giving a cab volume of 12.5sq m, 14% more than the industry-benchmark, which is held by the XF Super Space Cab.

XF AND XG/XG+ SHARED FEATURES

All these new generations cabs have a tapered cab shape with a new grille and elongated front, glossy inlay logo bar and an integrated air intake. Full LED headlights, daytime running lights and integrated cornering lights make them quite distinctive and give good night vision. LED Skylights – standard on the XG and XG+ – feature a specific design for each model.

AERODYNAMIC EQUATES TO FUEL SAVINGS

The curved windscreen, the elliptically-shaped corner panels, the streamlined A-pillar covers, a bottom plate with integrated air deflector and the

unique design of the wheel bay deflectors add to the aerodynamics, as do the optional cameras instead of mirrors, creating 19% better aerodynamics and up to 6.3% out of the total 10% fuel efficiency improvement.

NEW DRIVELINE

Along with the new cabs, there are new engines, TraXon transmissions and rear axles. For instance, all the engines have optimised combustion using new injectors, a new cylinder head and block, allowing higher cylinder pressures along with new pistons, liners and turbochargers. The Paccar MX-11 and MX-13 engines have increased torque of 50Nm to 100Nm in direct drive top gear and the top-rated 390kW/530PS version now offers 2,550Nm in every lower gear and 2,700Nm in top gear. Maximum torque is now available at 900rpm, even for the 390kW/530PS Paccar MX-13 engine and the engine brake delivers up to 20% more torque at lower revs.

LARGEST FUEL EFFICIENCY GAIN EVER

The new XF 4x2 tractor starts at around a kerbweight of 6,900kgs and enhanced driver assistance systems (Predictive Cruise Control 3 with extended EcoRoll functionalities and Preview Downhill Speed Control) bring the total efficiency



Swivel chairs and relax bed for maximum driver comfort



High-class dashboard with 12- and 10-inch displays

gain up to an impressive 10%, representing the largest fuel efficiency improvement in the history of Daf.

Industry-leading uptime is also supported by service intervals of up to 200,000km (124,275 miles). For long distance haulage, a long-drain option is available, resulting in all on-road applications requiring a service interval of once-a-year, unique in the industry.

SAFETY

The New XF, XG and XG+ all feature a large windscreen (2.3 m²) to enable an exceptionally low window belt line for an excellent direct view. Also, there's an option: on the co-driver's side a kerb view window is available, which – in combination with the new foldable co-driver seat – results in excellent side views.

There's also the option of Daf Digital Vision System, replacing the main and wide-angle mirrors, while the Daf Corner View is an option to replace the kerb- and front-view mirrors and which exceeds the field of vision of these conventional mirrors. One interesting feature is Daf's patented Programmed Cab Displacement System (ProCaDis), allowing a 400mm controlled cab displacement on the chassis during an accident, to absorb the energy and prevent the cab detaching.

As a result, ProCaDis maintains cab structure and maximises the survival space for occupants.

Safety features include brake-assist, lane-departure warning system and emergency brake lights. The latest version of advanced emergency braking system (AEBS-3) can provide up to full autonomous emergency braking to assist with collision avoidance of both stationary and moving vehicles from a speed of up to 80km/h (50mph). City turn assist system detects other road users or objects at the co-driver side.

DRIVER COMFORT

Climbing the three steps into the cab, the driver finds room and ample standing height in all models, varying from 1,900mm-2,075mm in the New Generation XF to no less than 2,145-2,200mm in the XG+. Available as options on XG and XG+ are a swivel driver and co-driver seat, which can be turned to a relaxing position after a long day's drive.

The instrument panel features a central 12-inch display for all vehicle-related information and an optional 10-inch touchscreen for the Daf Navigation and Infotainment System. On the central display the driver can select between two lay-out designs and four levels of information.

Sleeper cab bunks are 2,220mm long in all versions, with 800mm of width over the complete

length in the XG and XG+. As an option, a mechanical or fully electrically adjustable Daf Relax Bed is available.

A completely new rear wall control panel looks after the bed, lighting, climate, sound system, windows and roof hatch. The panel even offers a surveillance mode (which activates the Daf digital vision systems with both the Daf Digital Mirror System and the Daf Corner Eye) and a panic button that activates the horn and hazard lights. Under the bunk, there is plenty of storage options including either one or two drawers or one or two refrigerators in which 1.5-litre bottles can stand upright. Outside storage lockers at both the left and right sides, are accessible through large openings.

Optionally available on XG and XG+ is classy ambient lighting, featuring 15 LED lights and light strips, adjustable in brightness and colour, and supporting a highly exclusive environment.

All cabs are equipped with an automatic temperature control system as standard or a fully automated climate control system as an option. There's even a new optional fully integrated Park Airco for automatic cooling or heating the cab interior, when driving or idling.

Daf will start production of 4x2 and 6x2 tractor and rigid offerings of its completely New Generation XF, XG and XG+ in the final quarter of 2021.

THE LAST WORD

ANGELA MONTACUTE

MANAGING DIRECTOR, DIGITAL INNK

The environment, renewable energy and food poverty feature prominently among Montacute's interests and her favourite character in novels is a champion of the underdog – Jack Reacher

If I were made transport minister for the day I would put in place the means to exploit technology to accelerate the green agenda through delivery of integrated EV charging, road tolling and multi-modal mobility as a single, seamless service defined by new open-source standards.

My favourite movie quote is from *Thelma and Louise* (1991) Louise: "You've always been crazy; this is just the first chance you've had to express yourself."

My hobbies and interests are I love reading, especially crime thrillers, I'm a Jack Reacher superfan. I also enjoy walking and yoga.

A book that I would recommend others read is *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by Christy Lefteri (you will need tissues).

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is go see as much of the world as you can, while you can.

My first memory associated with a car? I was so proud when I picked up my first car, a red Mini Metro, I drove out of the garage and about 10 minutes later ground to a halt on the A24 just outside North Cheam, completely out of petrol. At least I learnt a valuable lesson!

If money was no object I would invest in projects that address food poverty and promote more environmentally-friendly and sustainable living.

The song I would have on my driving playlist is *Back to Life* by Soul to Soul.

My pet hate is people replying to your question with an answer to the question they wished you'd asked.

Why fleet?

I had been working at Lloyds Banking Group for 15 years for the most part in large business transformation programmes when I was contacted to see if I would be interested in a business transformation director role at Arval UK. I instantly got on with the people, took the job and loved it.

How I got here

I spent 15 years with Arval, first becoming operations director in the UK and then moving to its Paris HQ for seven years. My last role was as group chief operating officer. At the end of 2019 I returned to the UK and by summer 2020 had become managing director of Digital Innk, creating an innovative new app and SaaS platforms connecting drivers, fleet owner/operators and automotive service providers.

Latest products, developments and achievements

At the beginning of this year, we launched our comprehensive service, maintenance and repair, tyres and MOT solution, with integrated booking, in-app chat, document and photo storage and integrated billing features and this month we have launched our advanced notifications modules with service and MOT reminders, mileage capture, vehicle health checks all easily scheduled and fully automated.

My company in three words

Innovative, connected, fun.

Career influence

I have had some great colleagues and bosses, and a few not, but I have learnt from all of them.

Advice to fleet newcomers

Immerse yourself in the whole value chain and challenge the norms and conventions.

If I wasn't in fleet

I have a couple of non-exec roles in the renewable energy and charitable sectors. I find the variety of topics keeps me challenged and their ethos aligns with my own values, that's important to me.

Next issue: Michelle Junnor, UK fleet sales and operations manager at Cooper Tire & Rubber Company

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Figures shown are for comparability purposes. Only compare fuel consumption, CO₂ and electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the starting charge of the battery, accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load. Model shown: MG5 EV Exclusive with Silver Metallic Paint £28,140 On The Road (OTR) after PICG. *From a single charge on the WLTP combined cycle: Combined Range 214miles (344 km); City Range: 276 miles (444 km); Combined Driving Efficiency: 3.6 miles/kWh (17.5 kWh/100km). †Free Type 2 charging cable offer applies to fleet / business user registrations that have been supplied utilising approved support terms.

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