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

THE BIG PICTURE

It's rare for the media to be caught completely off-guard by a Government announcement. But that's exactly what happened a week ago when it changed, seemingly out of the blue, the criteria and size of the plug-in car and van grants.

Reasoning from the Government was reducing the maximum grant for cars from £3,000 to £2,500 and vans from £8,000 to either £3,000 (small vans) or £6,000 (large vans) would help spread the existing pot of money further.

So far, £1.3bn has been spent, with the latest funds of £582m announced in Budget 2020 due to last another two years. It seems unlikely to be replenished at that point and the grants may even be reduced further as demand increases.

The news saw a predictable backlash from the industry with universal condemnation, with many pointing to the fact that BEVs are more expensive than petrol/diesel equivalents.

Financially, the £500 difference is negligible, especially on total cost of ownership calculations. It's more about the message put out by the Government at a time when it is pressing ahead with decarbonisation, is hosting COP26 in November and has announced the ban on petrol/diesel cars and vans by 2030 as part of its zero emissions ambitions.

It's worth remembering that this is just the latest in a series of grant reductions which started a decade ago at £5,000. Subsequent reductions have not slowed the rate of growth and the Government could point towards this as proof that the incentive is no longer needed to drive BEV registrations, although their market share remains small.

In addition, 68% of BEV registrations last year were to fleets, where drivers have enjoyed zero BIK, giving companies the flexibility to request contributions towards the higher cost of these models.

Reducing the price cap from £50,000 to £35,000 means some cars have now dropped off the list, including the UK's current best-selling electric car, the Tesla Model 3 (ironically, the car that transport minister Grant Shapps took delivery of two years ago).

Nevertheless, 24 cars remain on the list (not counting derivatives), offering companies and drivers plenty of choice.

Arguably, the bigger concern is the plug-in van grants. The market is lagging behind cars with fewer BEV options, especially for bigger vans. The £5,000 cut for small vans will hit companies hard as they bulk buy – it equates to a half-million-pound hit for 100 vans.

The likes of British Gas, which aspires to switch its 12,000 operational vehicles (cars, small vans and large vans – see page 10) to electric by 2025, will need to reforecast budgets. Likewise, BT Group, with almost 30,000 vans and a 2030 BEV goal, as well as many other progressive businesses.

At a time of economic hardship, this is where most pain will be felt and is the most disappointing and harmful aspect of this Government decision.

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

Calling Fleet200 members:
The 2021 survey will be emailed to you in April. Please take time to complete this important piece of research. Any business running a run of more than 500 cars/vans is eligible – non-members should email me for details: stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk

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Burning question:
Which pandemic practice will you be slowest to drop?

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Range Rover PHEV	From 18% BIK	Up to 25 miles
Defender PHEV	From 18% BIK	Up to 27 miles
Discovery Sport PHEV	From 10% BIK	Up to 34 miles

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

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

CONTENTS

NEWS AND OPINION

TOMORROW'S FLEET

ELECTRIC FLEET

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THE SIEMENS EXPERIENCE P30

TODAY'S FLEET

BLAME GAME – AVs AND THE LAW P16

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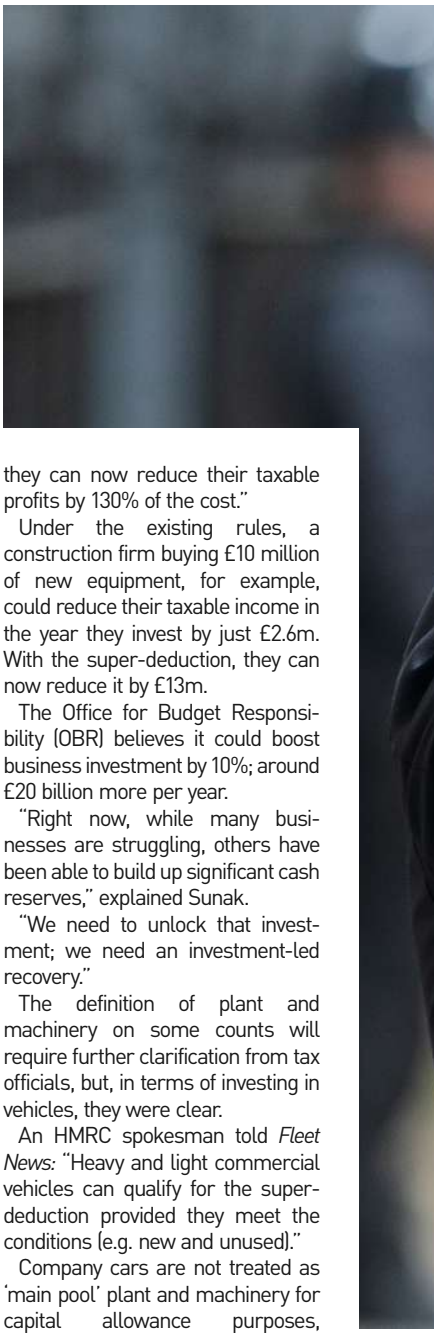
IGNITION

COMMERCIAL FLEET

Super-deduction tax relief may help drive van/truck investment

But uncertainty over whether charge point installations will also qualify



By Gareth Roberts

Fleet operators buying vans and trucks will benefit from a new super-deduction tax relief, which was announced in the Budget, HMRC has confirmed.

However, tax officials could not guarantee that electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure installed on business premises will similarly qualify.

The Government says companies investing in qualifying new plant and machinery, from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2023, will be able to claim a 130% super-deduction capital allowance, or a 50% first-year allowance (FYA) for qualifying special rate assets.

Expenditure qualifying for the super-deduction would have ordinarily been relieved at the main rate writing down allowance of 18%, while the special rate writing down allowance was 6%.

The super-deduction, says the Treasury, will allow companies to cut their tax bill by up to 25p for every £1 they invest.

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer, told MPs: "For the next two years, when companies invest, they can reduce their taxable profits not just by a proportion of the cost of that investment, as they do now, or even by 100% of their cost – the so-called full expensing some have called for. With the super-deduction, they can now reduce their taxable profits by 130% of the cost."

Under the existing rules, a construction firm buying £10 million of new equipment, for example, could reduce their taxable income in the year they invest by just £2.6m. With the super-deduction, they can now reduce it by £13m.

The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) believes it could boost business investment by 10%; around £20 billion more per year.

"Right now, while many businesses are struggling, others have been able to build up significant cash reserves," explained Sunak.

"We need to unlock that investment; we need an investment-led recovery."

The definition of plant and machinery on some counts will require further clarification from tax officials, but, in terms of investing in vehicles, they were clear.

An HMRC spokesman told *Fleet News:* "Heavy and light commercial vehicles can qualify for the super-deduction provided they meet the conditions (e.g. new and unused)."

Company cars are not treated as 'main pool' plant and machinery for capital allowance purposes, however, so they do not qualify for these reliefs.

When it came to businesses investing in EV charging infrastructure at the workplace, qualification was not as clear cut. HMRC indicated that, for now, it would be a case-by-case decision.

Capital expenditure on EV chargers and costs directly associated with their installation, currently qualify for 100% FYA, which is set to last until March 31, 2023.

Should this spend qualify as plant and machinery, the 30 percentage point uplift will be welcomed by many fleets, which are upgrading their energy and EV charging infrastructure to meet the increasing proportion of plug-in vehicles being operated.

FLEET RISK FROM CORPORATION TAX CHANGE

Budget 2021 included an increase in corporation tax which, according to Alphabet, needs to be "carefully considered" by businesses when devising fleet strategy.

The Chancellor announced that corporation tax will increase from 19% to 25% in April 2023.

Companies with profits of £50,000 or less, however, will remain at the current rate of 19%, and there will be a taper for firms earning above £50,000, with only firms earning £250,000 or above paying the full 25% rate.

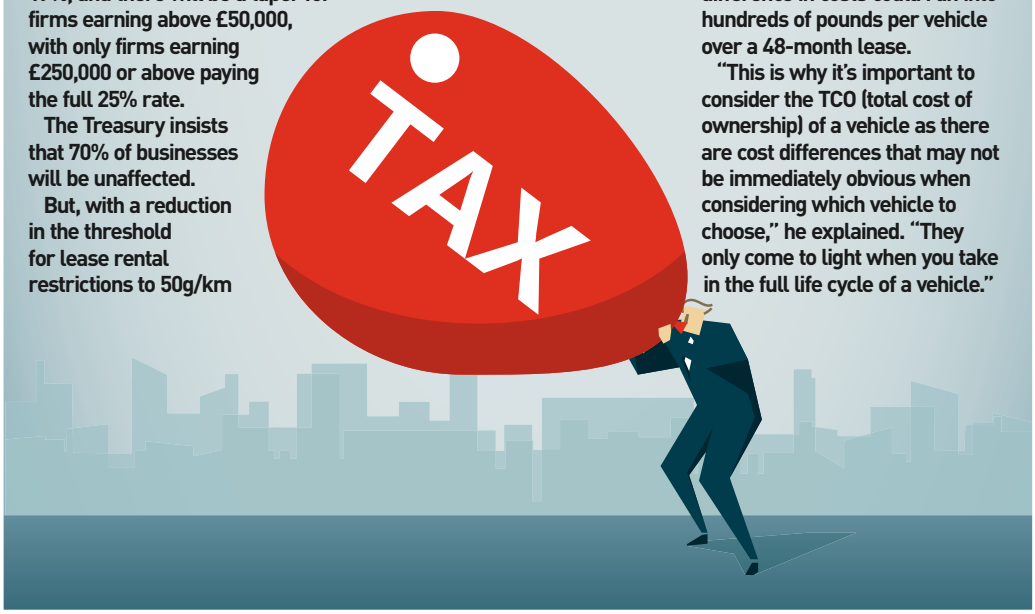
The Treasury insists that 70% of businesses will be unaffected.

But, with a reduction in the threshold for lease rental restrictions to 50g/km and below from April (meaning cars with higher emissions only qualify for 85% tax relief, not 100%), David Bushnell, principal consultant at Alphabet (GB), is urging fleets to consider how the changes could impact their bottom line.

He told *Fleet News:* "While it's unclear how many fleets this may affect, all businesses should carefully consider their fleet strategies and look closely at the wholelife cost of the vehicles they operate, as this may present crucial cost savings."

Bushnell says that if you compare a car at 50g/km and 51g/km at both 19% and 25% corporation tax (or any of the tapered levels between), then there is a difference on blocked corporation tax under lease rate rental restrictions. This difference in costs could run into hundreds of pounds per vehicle over a 48-month lease.

"This is why it's important to consider the TCO (total cost of ownership) of a vehicle as there are cost differences that may not be immediately obvious when considering which vehicle to choose," he explained. "They only come to light when you take in the full life cycle of a vehicle."



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Chancellor Rishi Sunak's measures are designed to prop up the pandemic-hit economy

The HMRC spokesman explained: "Provided the electric vehicle charging infrastructure is plant or machinery, critical consideration will then need to be given as to whether the expenditure is main rate or special rate expenditure."

Only main rate expenditure can qualify for the 130% super-deduction, while special rate expenditure can qualify for the new 50% special rate FYA.

"Generally speaking, integral features of buildings and structures and long-life assets are special rate," he said. "Electrical systems are included in the definition of integral features so this will need to be considered on the particular facts of the case as to whether the electric vehicle charging infrastructure is an integral feature of a structure or building."

> "WE NEED TO UNLOCK THAT INVESTMENT; WE NEED AN INVESTMENT-LED RECOVERY"
>
> **RISHI SUNAK, CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER**

Tom Callow, head of insight and external affairs at BP Chargemaster, told *Fleet News* that, while businesses have benefited for several years from the 100% FYA for expenditure on EV charge points, the new super-deduction of 130% may deliver "even greater benefits to businesses, assuming their particular charge point purchases qualify".

Adam Hall, head of electric vehicles at Drax, also believes the new relief would make upfront investment in EV charging infrastructure more attractive.

"When combined with other Government grants and subsidies, it gives businesses and fleet operators a strong incentive to transition their fleet to electric sooner rather than later," he said.

James McKemey, head of insights at Pod Point, agreed, adding that "firms must be profitable to be generating corporation tax bills, and not all are, but for those who are, this can act as a potent incentive to start providing charging infrastructure".

The history of capital allowances was that up until 2008, if expenditure was on items of plant and machinery with which you carried on your trade, it qualified for capital allowances, but if it was just part of the building it

did not. That changed in 2008 and electrical systems were classed as special rate and would have qualified for the 6% tax relief.

Nigel May, tax partner at MHA MacIntyre Hudson, explained: "What we're trying to find out from HMRC is whether they accept DC charging points as plant and machinery.

"Under the pre-2008 rules, they would, but they are, nevertheless, an electrical system so we're waiting for a response from Revenue on this.

"Also, for example, if you're putting a fresh electricity supply in to make your EV charger work, will that be viewed differently from upgrading your existing supply? The devil is in the detail."

Electrical systems are defined by HMRC as a system for taking electrical power and distributing it through the building or structure. The problem is an EV charge point is a distribution point, says May.

Callow added that it was important for fleet and procurement managers to consider all of the EV charging incentives available to them and their employees, and "not just these capital write-down allowances".

Budget 2021 did not have any other surprises for fleet operators. A planned hike in fuel duty, due to take effect next month (April), was cancelled by the Chancellor (fleetnews.co.uk, March 3).

It is the eleventh consecutive year duty has been frozen. However, the Treasury says that future fuel duty rates will be considered in the context of the UK's commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, suggesting it may be the last time fleets can expect a freeze.

Meanwhile, there was no mention of future benefit-in-kind (BIK) company car tax rates.

Ashley Barnett, head of fleet consultancy at Lex Autolease, said: "It's encouraging to see that no changes have been made to the company car tables outlined by the Chancellor last year. However, a long-term visibility of company car rates beyond 2025 would have given decision-makers the clarity they need to invest in green fleets now.

"Fleet replacements typically operate in four-to-five-year-cycles and, without sight of future tax liabilities, it's harder to make purchasing decisions with confidence."

There was also no mention of road pricing as a potential replacement for fuel duty and VED. However, the Budget did contain an announcement around a series of consultations the Government will launch this year, publishing a 'Command Paper – Tax policies and consultations (Spring 2021)' on Friday (March 23).

130%

is the new super-deduction rate put forward in the 2021 Budget

In terms of vehicle taxes, it also revealed vehicle excise duty (VED) rates for cars, vans and motorcycles will increase in line with the retail price index (RPI) from April 1.

To support the haulage sector and pandemic recovery efforts, however, the Government says it will freeze VED for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) for 2021-22 and will suspend the HGV Levy for another 12 months from August 2021.

Furthermore, from April 6, fuel benefit charges and the van benefit charge will increase in line with the consumer price index (CPI).

"(THE SUPER-DEDUCTION) GIVES BUSINESSES AND FLEET OPERATORS A STRONG INCENTIVE TO TRANSITION THEIR FLEET TO ELECTRIC SOONER RATHER THAN LATER"

ADAM HALL, DRAX

Chancellor throws cash around – and there's barely a murmur of dissent

PAUL HOLLICK, CHAIR OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FLEET PROFESSIONALS

We're living through highly unusual times and this was a highly unusual Budget. Any Chancellor who threw cash around in the manner that Rishi Sunak announced at the despatch box earlier this month would normally, quite rightly, be the subject of intense questioning and huge political pressure. Yet there has been barely a murmur of dissent.

That's because there is an almost complete consensus that the economy continues to require support on a huge basis as we hopefully emerge from the pandemic. For the fleet industry, as for everyone else, it is this broad macroeconomic largesse that remains crucial. Everything from the continuation of furloughing schemes to the various new grant and loan programmes for businesses are still, we believe, essential for the time being.

However, that means there was relatively little detail for the fleet sector to discuss. The 130% capital allowances super-deduction is an intriguing idea and we understand it can be applied to some fleet-specific plant and equipment, possibly including charging facilities for fleets adopting EVs. This is an outstanding opportunity to suitably equip company car parks with bays of chargers and we'd like to see employers taking advantage of this opportunity.

Elsewhere, freeports are a key element of the Government's post-Brexit regeneration policy and, if successful, the new sites announced could become significant hubs of fleet activity both for cars and commercial vehicles but this is a medium-to-long term strategy and will have little effect for some years.

In terms of immediate disappointments, it would have been constructive to see some direct help for dealers and for daily rentals. Both have had a very tough time and are good candidates for specific forms of assistance. Also, we feel that kerbside charging for people without a driveway is the major weak spot in national EV adoption and we'd like to have heard more about how the Government intend to fill this hole and increase the grants available.

Beyond that, there is not much to add. There remains a list of fleet-specific matters that we believe the Government needs to tackle – ranging from the future of benefit-in-kind taxation in a fleet industry where EVs will become the dominant type of company car through to wider transport issues such as road charging – but all of them will have to wait until the coronavirus waters have calmed. However, it is probably important to acknowledge that the need to claw back the massive spending that is currently taking place has changed the backdrop against which discussions of these issues will eventually take place.

To return to my original theme, the crucial development is that businesses and individuals continue to be financially supported through the historically difficult conditions that we are all facing.

On that front, the Chancellor appears to have unquestionably delivered – although only someone who hadn't been paying attention to the capricious nature of the pandemic so far would bet against further, targeted help being needed in the future.

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British Gas EV-only 2025 target given boost by Hitachi flexibility

Shorter lease periods and no early termination costs make ambitious deadline possible

By Gareth Roberts

A plan to electrify all British Gas vehicles by 2025 is being helped by Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions's (HCVS) decision to allow diesel vans to be terminated early at no extra cost.

Centrica, owner of British Gas, has committed to electrify its 12,000-strong operational fleet by 2025, five years earlier than originally planned, as part of its commitment to become a net zero organisation.

It has also committed to make its 1,500 company cars EV-only in the same time frame.

However, in order for the total cost of ownership (TCO) to remain competitive on diesel vehicles still joining the fleet, lease provider Hitachi Capital needed to be creative.

Jon Lawes, managing director of HCVS, told *Fleet News* that his firm's role was to find the solutions to match British Gas's ambition.

"Normally, the most economic TCO for British Gas would be leasing a diesel vehicle for six years, but that doesn't make sense if you've got a strategy and ambition to electrify your fleet by 2025."

The issue for British Gas was how to make that TCO calculation stack-up with a shorter cycle on diesel vehicles joining the fleet now, and potentially over the next couple of years, while an electric equivalent is not available.

> "WE'VE GOT MORE SKIN IN THE GAME IN TERMS OF RESIDUAL VALUE RISK"
>
> **JON LAWES, HITACHI CAPITAL VEHICLE SOLUTIONS**

British Gas recently placed an order for a further 2,000 Vauxhall Vivaro-e vans

In working out a solution for British Gas, Lawes explains that Hitachi Capital looked at the "components of the cost". Racking, which has been installed in diesel VW Crafter vans currently joining the fleet, will be re-used in the electric equivalent when it joins the fleet, effectively spreading the cost over two vehicles.

"We've also given them a shorter lease period, but with a window to be able to terminate the vehicle free of charge," said Lawes.

"Effectively, we've got more skin in the game in terms of residual value risk to help them transfer to electrification."

For small- and medium-sized vans, there are electric solutions available now where the TCO can work for a fleet operator.

Indeed, British Gas signed a deal for a further 2,000 Vivaro-e electric vans from Vauxhall, last month, in addition to the 1,000 ordered last summer. All 3,000 EVs will be on the road by 2022.

However, for large panel vans, according to Lawes, while there are some good solutions to make the switch to electric, such as the Fiat e-Ducato and the Renault Master ZE, the TCO is not competitive enough right now for mass adoption.

Steve Winter, head of fleet at British Gas and a Fleet News Award winner, said: "Due to the lack of suitable large electric vans that currently work on our TCO model, we have taken the decision to lease through Hitachi a number of diesel VW Crafter vans on a short lease with the flexibility to transition to the e-Crafter when launched and recycle racking across the two vehicles.

"Although there are no fixed dates for the transition, VW's roadmap for EVs matched ours and gave confidence in the plan and having Hitachi on board enabled the flexibility we were looking for."

The e-Crafter was meant to be arriving in the UK in limited numbers throughout 2020 and 2021, but is now not expected to be launched as a fully electric vehicle until it receives a facelift, probably later this year.

British Gas had originally planned to transition 10% of its commercial fleet to electric by 2017. However, it missed that target, pushing it back to 2020, blaming shortcomings in the charging infrastructure and the technology available at the time (fleetnews.co.uk, March 23, 2017).

Centrica later committed to electrify its fleet operations by 2030, by becoming a member of The Climate Group's EV100 initiative alongside SSE and Mitie (fleetnews.co.uk, July 8, 2019), before announcing the more ambitious target of 2025.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said: "It's encouraging to see that one of Britain's best-known brands is leading the way with the largest commercial EV fleet in the UK."

Hitachi's funding arrangement with British Gas to help it make that switch to electrification faster is not unique, with other lease providers being similarly creative.

Volkswagen Financial Services Fleet, for example, launched a new offer for fleet and business customers that want to switch to a new VW ID3 electric car (fleetnews.co.uk, March 2).

The leasing provider is offering to pay early termination fees for existing lease contracts, even if they are with another provider.

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*Range of up to 336 miles (WLTP combined) for the ID.3 Pro S (with 77 kWh net battery energy; Electricity consumption, kWh/100 km: combined 16.1-15.5; CO_2 emission combined, g/km: 0; Efficiency class: A+). Range values of the series car according to WLTP may differ depending on final equipment. Figures shown are for comparability purposes and were obtained after the battery had been fully charged. Mains electricity required for charging. Only compare electric range figures with vehicles tested to the same technical procedures. Figures may not reflect real life driving results.

Fleet industry given no warning as plug-in grants are cut immediately

Some popular models no longer eligible for grants; orders still in progress will be affected

By Gareth Roberts

Criticism is mounting over the Government's decision to immediately cut plug-in car, van and truck grants, leaving many fleets with vehicles on order out of pocket.

Ministers announced they were cutting the electric car grant from £3,000 to £2,500 and would exclude models that cost more than £35,000, without any warning.

The move affects cars still going through the order process with a leasing provider, but not those where an order has already been placed with the manufacturer.

The Government defended the decision by saying that grants will no longer be available for higher-priced vehicles, "typically bought by drivers who can afford to switch without a subsidy from taxpayers" (fleetnews.co.uk, March 18).

The changes mean popular fleet vehicles like the Tesla Model 3 and Hyundai Kona Electric 64kWh will no longer be eligible for the grant.

David Bushnell, principal consultant at Alphabet (GB), told *Fleet News:* "By providing little advanced warning on these grant changes, the fleet industry will be immediately impacted."

Plug-in van customers had been eligible for a 20% reduction on the vehicle purchase price, up to a maximum of £8,000.

> "THIS WILL HAVE COST IMPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESSES ACROSS THE UK"
>
> **DAVID BUSHNELL, ALPHABET**

Plug-in car grant — now £2,500 — a £500 cut

Small plug-in van grant (less than 2.5 tonnes) — now up to £3,000 — down from up to £8,000

Large plug-in van grant (2.5-3.5 tonnes) — now up to £6,000 — down from up to £8,000

Plug-in truck grant (vans and trucks from 3.5-12 tonnes) — now up to £16,000 — down from up to £20,000

Large plug-in truck grant (greater than 12 tonnes) — now up to £25,000 — an increase of £5,000

However, fleets will now receive a grant for 35% of the purchase price for small vans, up to a maximum of £3,000, and 20% of the purchase price for a large van, up to a maximum of £6,000.

The plug-in truck grant, which had provided funding of up to £20,000, has been cut by £4,000 for small trucks (3.5-12 tonnes). The new grant covers 20% of the purchase price, up to a maximum of £16,000.

It will be available for the first 250 orders placed. Grants at the £16,000 rate are also limited to 10 per customer. After the 250-order limit is reached, a maximum grant rate of £6,000 will apply.

However, a new large plug-in truck grant (greater than 12 tonnes) will now offer funding of up to £25,000 – an increase of £5,000.

Bushnell said: "Adjusting these figures at a time when decisions on company policies are being made could be potentially damaging to the fleet industry, particularly as it is responsible for the majority of the used car market.

"There are going to be a significant number of corporate and commercial vehicles currently in the lease co. order process that will now miss out on the Government grant.

"This will have cost implications for businesses across the UK, at a time when many are trying to recover from the pandemic."

This latest reduction in the plug-in grant comes after the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a similar cut in the Budget, last year (fleetnews.co.uk, March 20, 2020). The plug-in car grant was also cut by £500, falling from £3,500 to £3,000, and excluded cars costing £50,000 or more for the first time. Plug-in grants for electric vans and trucks remained at the same level.

When introduced in 2011, the plug-in car grant offered motorists up to £5,000 when buying a vehicle with CO_2 emissions less than 75g/km.

The plug-in grant scheme has supported the purchase of 285,000 vehicles to date.

Fleet trade and training body, the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), believes it is "too soon" to cut support for EVs.

"We're especially disappointed around the £35,000 ceiling on cars," said AFP chair Paul Hollick. "There are a number of models that fleets are adopting in number that will be affected by this.

"The situation in the van market is even more acute. Fleet adoption of electric vans has barely begun simply because of lack of availability of models and to reduce the grants substantially, just as they are starting to enter production, is a little mystifying."

He added: "The fact that all of this takes effect immediately means orders still in progress will be affected.

"A business that sent an order for an EV to their leasing company yesterday, but which hasn't yet been placed with the manufacturer, will have to be requoted, which is just an unnecessary complication."

The cut in the van grants will be particularly felt by fleets trying to make the total of cost of ownership (TCO) stack-up.

Department for Transport figures show the Government has provided £100 million in funding through the plug-in van grant scheme, since it was launched in 2012 supporting the purchase of 15,000 low-emission vans and trucks.

AI system claims to prevent more than 90% of crashes

Humanising Autonomy's Behaviour AI is undergoing trials in London with bus and vans fleets

By Stephen Briers

A new behavioural artificial intelligence (AI) system claims to prevent more than 90% of crashes by predicting the actions of pedestrians and other road users and alerting the driver to a potential incident.

Behaviour AI is available as a dashcam after-fit solution but the company behind the system, Humanising Autonomy, hopes it will be offered as standard fit within the next two to three years, linked to advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS). It is already in talks with several vehicle manufacturers.

Co-founder and chief product officer Leslie Nooteboom said the system helps autonomous systems "to understand people". It predicts what other road users will do and alerts the driver. It also provides the fleet with the data about any near miss (as well as any incident), which helps with driver training.

The system has been installed on Arriva buses in London for more than a year while trials have just started with a van-based fleet operator through Humanising Autonomy's partnership with FreightLab, an innovation challenge between Transport for London (TfL) and 10 industry partners including Royal Mail, DPD, UPS and John Lewis Partnership.

London buses are taking part in the AI trials

Behaviour AI scans the road for vulnerable road users and predicts their next movement. Nooteboom claims it can detect objects up to 80 metres ahead at 40mph, twice the distance of the industry standard, with 99% accuracy.

"It's not just recognition; it predicts if they are going to cross the road or where they are moving to on the road," he said. "Our data shows that the system can predict two seconds before the driver realises what is happening and send them an alert.

"It is also continuously learning and not just from one driver, from the entire fleet because all the data sits within our management system. We believe it can prevent around 92% of accidents."

The system is frequently updated to take account of new forms of mobility, such as e-scooters.

"They were a problem because they (riders) weren't moving their limbs, but they were moving fast. So, we had to adapt the model to detect e-scooters," Nooteboom explained.

"This is where we add intelligence to the system so it machine learns and applies that to the real world. It doesn't just learn from the data we give it; it's an interpretable AI approach. We can see how it's making decisions, so we know how sure it is about making those decisions. Then we know what we need to do to make it even better, which we do with over-the-air updates."

The venture capitalist-based company has its own data to support its claims about accident reductions; within the next six months it will have analysed copious amounts of real fleet data to provide robust proof.

This includes using near-miss data for driver training purposes.

"We take the video of the near miss and extract information on the risk level for driver education, even where there was no accident," said Nooteboom. "We also provide the information for the insurance company so they can understand the lead up to the accident."

The pricing structure has yet to be set, but simply preventing one crash would justify the investment, according to Nooteboom.

He added: "We believe we are first to market with this solution. It uses small chips so it can be used now. The competition is the predictive AI in the full autonomous vehicles."

> "THE SYSTEM CAN PREDICT TWO SECONDS BEFORE THE DRIVER REALISES WHAT IS HAPPENING"
>
> **LESLIE NOOTEBOOM, HUMANISING AUTONOMY**

SOCIAL DISTANCING SOLUTIONS

Humanising Autonomy is playing a part in improving the safety of passengers and staff at public transport interchanges through a partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM).

The company's behavioural video analytics software was deployed last year to help TfGM understand social distancing issues, assess how passenger behaviour is affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and make temporary infrastructure changes.

By analysing CCTV footage, the system enabled TfGM to re-route public transport to hot spots where lots of people were waiting for a bus.

The data will also be used to better understand the capacity for walking and cycling, and how space is used at transport interchanges.

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FEB

17

PUBLIC CHARGING COST DIFFERENCES HIGHLIGHTED IN NEW STUDY

Electric vehicle drivers can pay more than four times as much for the same amount of electricity when they use different public chargers, new research reveals.

19

SUPREME COURT RULES UBER DRIVERS ARE WORKERS

The UK Supreme Court has ruled that Uber must classify its drivers as workers rather than self-employed, which could have wider consequences for the gig economy.

23

NEW ELECTRIC HYUNDAI IONIQ 5 BREAKS COVER

Hyundai has launched the first model in its new brand dedicated to electric vehicles – the Ioniq 5 – which is available with a range of electric power configurations.

25

E10 PETROL TO BE AVAILABLE IN THE UK FROM SEPTEMBER

The Government says that E10, a blend of petrol and ethanol, could cut transport CO_2 emissions by 750,000 tonnes a year – the equivalent of taking 350,000 cars off the road.

26

HMRC PUBLISHES NEW ADVISORY FUEL RATES (AFRs)

HMRC has published new advisory fuel rates (AFRs), effective from March 1 for company car drivers claiming back fuel costs from their employer.

MAR

2

VOLVO TO BECOME EV-ONLY CAR BRAND BY 2030

Volvo has outlined its plans to become a fully electric car company by 2030 and will launch a completely new family of electric cars in the coming years.

3

AUDI ENHANCES ELECTRIC RANGE ON A6, A7 AND Q5 PHEVs

The lithium-ion battery now has a gross capacity of 17.9kWh with a voltage of 381 volts, while PHEV powertrains are also now offered in the Q5 Sportback and the A6 Avant, for the first time.

8

LORNA McATEAR IS BARBARA COX WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2021

Lorna McAtear, fleet manager at National Grid, has received the Barbara Cox Woman of the Year Award at an event to mark International Women's Day.

HYBRID 'SIGNIFICANT DISTANCE' CONSULTATION ANNOUNCED AHEAD OF BAN

10

MOST COMMENTED

A consultation will be launched later this year to decide the distance a new hybrid electric vehicle must be able to travel on zero emissions to remain on sale from 2030 to 2035.

NEW VIRTUAL FUEL CARD HELPS FLEETS CHARGE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

11

MOST SHARED

A new fleet charging management system has been launched by Centrica to help fleets with drivers charging commercial vehicles while working remotely.

THIEVES TARGET EV CHARGING CABLES

12

MOST READ

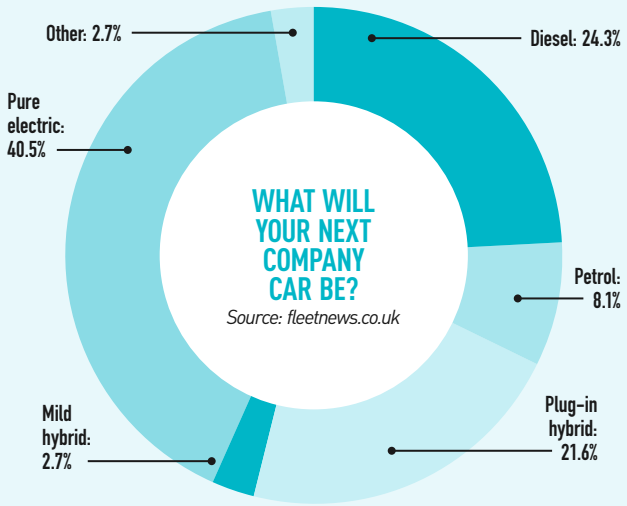
Company car drivers are being warned not to leave the charging cables for their electric or plug-in hybrid vehicles unsecured, as criminals are targeting the high-value items.

MARSHALL LEASING MD PETER CAKEBREAD RETIRES

15

The managing director of Marshall Leasing, Peter Cakebread, will be retiring on April 30 after 30 years at the helm, the business has confirmed.

FLEET NEWS POLL



FLEET NEWS VIEW:

Our poll shows that just one-in-four respondents (24.3%) will choose a diesel vehicle as their next company car, with an incredible two-out-of-five company car drivers (40.5%) instead opting for a pure electric vehicle (EV). A further one-in-five (21.6%) said they would instead be opting for a plug-in hybrid. The poll results suggest that a better choice of EVs, longer ranges and EV-friendly company car tax rates are persuading more drivers to make the switch.

THIS WEEK'S POLL: Do you have electric vehicle charge points at your workplace?

The blame game

Law Commission report looks at who would be legally liable if an autonomous vehicle is involved in a motoring offence. *Andrew Ryan* reports

One of the most commonly asked questions about self-driving vehicles is that when something goes wrong, who will be liable? Is it the person sitting in the 'driver's seat', the fleet operator or the manufacturer?

It is a debate which has long hung over the autonomous vehicle (AV) sector, but has been tackled in a recent report by the Law Commission as it prepares to publish recommendations for legislation before the end of the year.

"One of the big things we've determined is that you can't just keep the current system for enforcing road traffic rules when it comes to automated vehicles," says Jessica Uguccioni, lead lawyer of the Law Commission's automated vehicles review.

"At the moment you can basically lock people up if they do something really, really bad on the road, like dangerous driving, but that is just not going to work with the automated driving regime.

"We need to have a system which is much more based on ensuring safety to begin with, but then understanding why things have gone wrong and preventing them happening again because a single incident can have ramifications for many other vehicles."

For example, if an autonomous vehicle runs through a red light, analysis should be carried out to determine why that has happened and, potentially, modify other vehicles in the fleet so the incident is not repeated.

"It's basically getting to the root cause of things which is much more in the spirit of aviation and other industries where safety is not something that is a competitive edge, but something that's shared across the industry," Uguccioni adds.

"We saw with the Uber incident in the States in 2018 when a pedestrian was hit that it was a basically a big blow to the whole industry.

"Testing was affected for all companies, not just one. This shows how interconnected it all is."

The Law Commission says different levels of automation should affect where liability lies. Its report refers to fully autonomous vehicles as 'no user in charge' (NUIC) as they can travel without a driver in them.

If there are people in the vehicle, they are merely passengers so have no legal responsibility for the way the vehicle drives and are under no obligation to take over the driving.

"At the present stage of development, it appears that NUICs will require some level of supervision from a remote operation centre," says the report.

"Remote operation of vehicles is a step into the unknown. Despite several trials and increased interest in the subject, there is little public information about how it might work.

"Initially, all NUICs should be supervised and maintained by a licensed operator, irrespective of whether they are used for private or business purposes, and whether or not they carry passengers.

"They would need to maintain and insure vehicles, install safety-critical updates and take action if their vehicles are causing a danger or obstruction."

The report says a private individual may still own an NUIC vehicle, but they must contract with a licensed operator for supervision and maintenance services, including installing software and maintaining cybersecurity.

If an offence appears to have been caused by an NUIC, the Law Commission says the police should refer the matter to a regulator for investigation.

The regulator should apply a range of regulatory sanctions to the Automated Driving System Entity (ADSE) – the company responsible for the automated driving system – including improvement notices, fines and, if necessary, withdrawal of authorisation.

"The fines would not be the same as those faced by a human driver," says the Law Commission. "For an example, an ADSE would not necessarily face a £130 fine if a self-driving vehicle wrongly enters a box junction.

"Instead, it may be issued with an improvement notice to fix the problem, followed by a much larger fine if the problem persists."

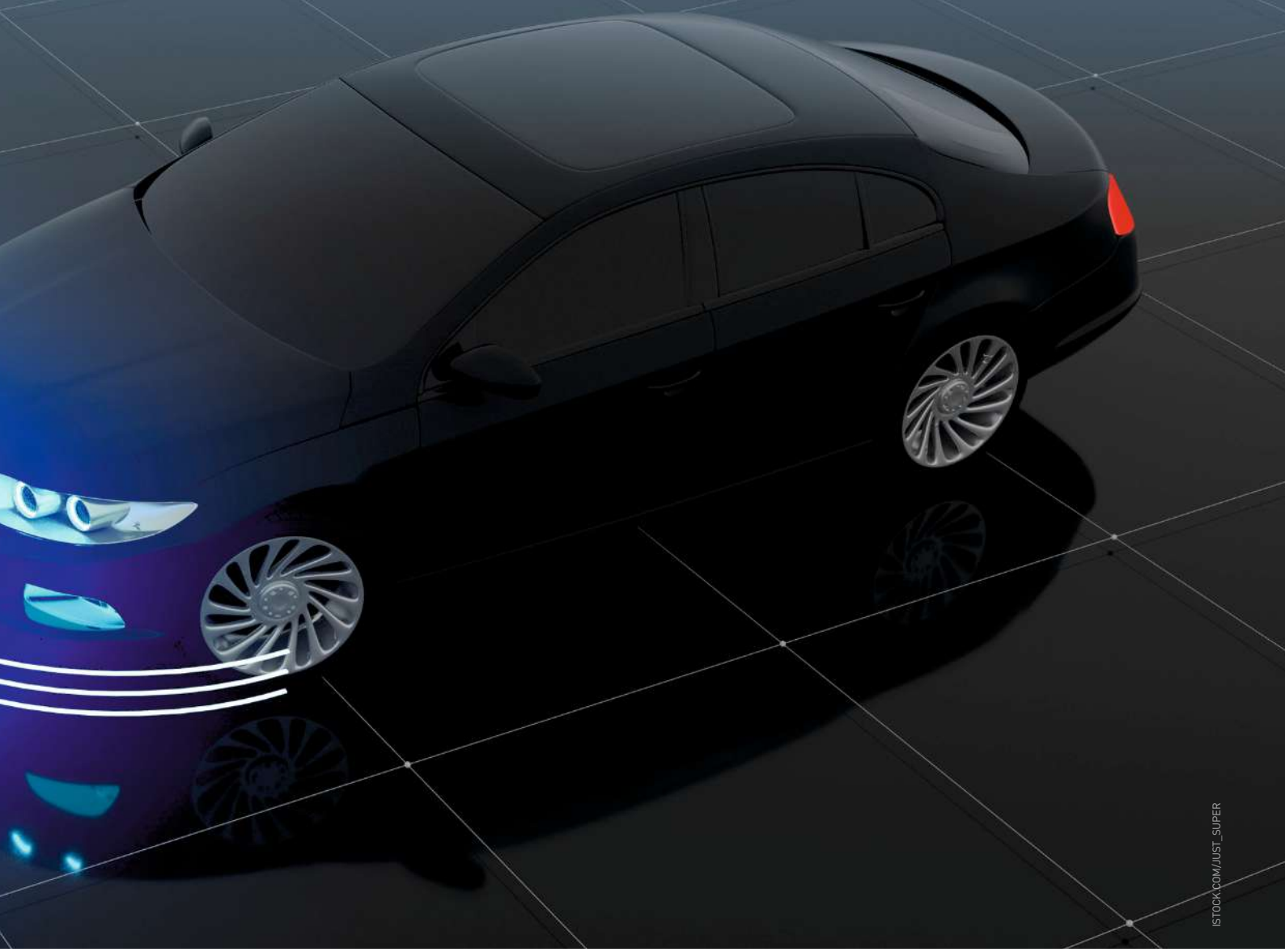
HUMAN COMPLICATIONS

Determining liability for autonomous vehicles which require a human driver to be in control of the vehicle at times is more complicated.

While there will be periods when the vehicle is fully autonomous or when it is being fully controlled by a human, there will also be times when the vehicle is transferring control to the driver.

This poses a more immediate issue than NUICs, as vehicles fitted with automatic lane-keeping systems (ALKS) could be on the UK's motorways later this year.

This technology is designed to enable drivers



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– for the first time ever – to delegate the task of driving to the vehicle.

When activated, the system keeps the vehicle within its lane, controlling its movements for extended periods of time without the driver needing to do anything.

Their purpose is to allow drivers caught in motorway traffic jams to relax, but they must be ready and able to resume control when prompted by the vehicle.

In August last year, the Government issued a call of evidence to seek views from the industry on the technology to pave the way towards introducing it safely in Great Britain within the current legal framework.

These responses are currently being analysed, says Catherine Lovell, deputy head of CCAV (the Department for Transport's Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles).

"ALKS has the potential to bring safety benefits," she adds. "The benefits of automated vehicles, generally speaking, are that they don't get distracted, they don't get tired, they don't drive drunk.

"There are all sorts of reasons why a machine might be better at some things than a human. But they are likely to not be as good as humans at other things.

"ALKS has a very specific and constrained design domain so it's low speed, motorway, congested traffic.

> "AVs, GENERALLY SPEAKING, DON'T GET DISTRACTED, THEY DON'T GET TIRED, THEY DON'T DRIVE DRUNK"
>
> **CATHERINE LOVELL, CCAV**

"It is much easier to consider the potential for safety benefits there as you don't have worries about things like pedestrians."

For vehicles which switch between human control and fully-automated driving, the Law Commission is proposing that when the vehicle is self-driving, the person in the driving seat becomes a user-in-charge (UIC) rather than a driver.

This means the UIC could lawfully undertake activities which drivers of conventional vehicles are not allowed to do as it would distract them from driving, such as reading emails or watching a movie.

The report says if a collision is caused while the vehicle is driving itself, its insurer would compensate the victim, irrespective of fault by either the UIC or the ADSE.

The UIC could not be prosecuted for offences such as careless or dangerous driving, exceeding the speed limit or running a red light.

"The main role of the UIC is to take over driving, either following a transition demand or through conscious choice," says the Law Commission.

"They therefore need to be qualified and fit to drive. However, while the automated driving system is engaged, they would not be a driver.

"They would not be liable for any criminal offence or civil penalty which arises out of dynamic driving.

"They would, however, be subject to other driver responsibilities, such as carrying insurance and reporting accidents."

SAFE HANDOVER

When the vehicle needs to hand control back to the driver, the Law Commission says it is reasonable to expect a UIC to respond to a transition demand that provides clear multisensory alerts and gives the user sufficient time to gain situational awareness.

"As the first generation of self-driving vehicles is likely to rely on transition demands to be safe, it is important the UIC responds appropriately," it says.

"We propose that, following the end of the transition period, the UIC would require the full

legal obligations of a driver. Even if they have not taken control of the vehicle, they would be deemed to be a driver and their immunity for dynamic driving would cease.

"This does not mean that failing to respond to a transition demand would automatically be an offence.

"If the vehicle is able to park itself safely and legally at the side of the road, no offence will be committed.

"Our aim is to provide a flexible penalty which depends on what happens after the demand period has ended.

"Initially, failing to respond is likely to lead to a serious criminal offence. As the sophistication of the automated driving system increases, the effect of such failure will become less significant."

As with the NUIC, if the vehicle acted in a way while it was self-driving which would be criminal if performed by a human driver, this would be treated as a regulatory matter.

However, and as with the NUIC, this would not mean there would be no criminal liability if things go wrong.

"We do think criminal law has a role, because I think the public will expect accountability if there is really bad behaviour," says Uguccioni.

"But that kind of bad behaviour would be more in the region of hiding test results or defeat devices or that kind of thing.

"It would not be the same nature of wrongdoing, as we see today with drivers, so it's a real radical shift."

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WILL SENSORS HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO WEATHER THE STORMS?

It's famously a favourite subject for small talk, but the weather could have a major impact on the safe operation of AVs.

As well as cameras, AVs use a variety of perception sensors such as lidar, radar and infrared to determine their surroundings and the location of other road users.

These rely on the transmission of electromagnetic waves through the air, but these tend to be absorbed and scattered by airborne water droplets and ice crystals, says Richard Morris, innovation lead for connected autonomous vehicles at Innovate UK.

"Whenever you put anything in between a target and a sensor, you will attenuate or scuttle the signal," he adds.

"The question is whether this will be significant and if it will be a problem."

As well as weather such as rain, fog and snow, other environmental conditions which could be problematic for AVs are wet roads and spray from other vehicles.

"There's a great deal we don't understand about weather, environmental conditions and their effects on perception sensors," says Morris. "The problem is having confidence over the entire operating range that the vehicle is likely to see and we don't really understand how even relatively conventional sensors will behave in all conditions."

Morris says Innovate UK is working with the Met Office and National Physics Laboratory to investigate the issue.

"We want to understand and quantify the basic physics of what is happening," he adds.

"We can then identify the most likely weaknesses of a specific sensor and as we identify weather aspects which may be problematic, we want to test the theory with practical real-world testing."

One method the organisations is looking at is to install an array of sensors near a weather station and wait for the weather to happen.

"This will probably take some years, but we should see many variations on normal weather and be able to fully characterise non-extreme conditions which might cause problems," says Morris.

"The second we call storm chasing. We go to areas where we believe extreme weather is likely to occur and characterise it as best we can on an opportunistic basis.

"Both of these techniques are far more informative than simply putting sensors on vehicles and driving for thousands of miles without any intentional encounter with poor weather and with no way to accurately characterise our weather on the off-chance it is encountered."

Morris says if the weaknesses of particular technologies are established, the partners can devise repeatable tests which characterise how and when they fail.

This will allow developers to create an overall system of sensors which will be reliable in all conditions.

"My belief is that we have all the core technologies we need at the moment and can make systems today which are perfectly capable of dealing with anything the weather can throw at us, but there will be a significant cost to that," says Morris.

"A lot of these technologies are very expensive and still in prototype form. They're promising, but we need to get the volumes up and the costs down."

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330 MILES' RANGE IN FIVE MINUTES

Advances in battery technologies could mean future electric vehicles could offer petrol/diesel levels of convenience when it comes to charging. *Andrew Ryan* reports

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Range anxiety has traditionally been the biggest obstacle to widespread battery vehicle adoption, but this now seems set to be usurped by another: charge times.

This shift has largely been caused by the availability of an increasing number of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) with longer ranges, making them more petrol- or diesel-like to operate.

However, this is shifting the focus to a part of the internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle experience which BEVs cannot currently emulate: the ability to 'fill-up' with enough fuel to drive 300 miles in around five minutes.

For private motorists this is the cause of inconvenience. For fleets, it is particularly pertinent as the more time a vehicle spends charging during the day, the less it can be used for work.

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

This sentiment has been supported by research revealed last month in BP's *Future of Fleet* report, which found 24% of fleet managers who do not yet have electric vehicles (EVs) said they do not have the time to wait for EVs to charge while on the road.

A survey by Castrol also found charge time was the second most important challenge to the mainstream adoption of EVs – behind vehicle price – while UK fleets said they require an average charge time of 36 minutes before they would consider buying an EV.

Although charging and battery technology has developed rapidly since mainstream BEVs such as the first Nissan Leaf were launched in 2011, this is beyond the capability of most current EVs.

One of the fastest charging is the Porsche Taycan, which can go from 5% to 80% state of charge in 22 minutes (around 200 miles of range) at a maximum rate of 270kW.

The Hyundai Kona Electric, a more typical fleet car, takes around 54 minutes to charge from 0% to 80% (around 240 miles of range) at a 100kW fast-charging station.

The rate of charging slows at 80% capacity to preserve the car's battery life.

This limitation is often pointed to by advocates of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, which can take on enough fuel for 300 miles in around four minutes, but advancements in battery technology is bringing the possibility of charging a BEV with 300 miles range in five minutes closer to reality.

In January, Israeli company StoreDot announced the release of battery engineering samples which it says can meet this goal to showcase the technology to potential EV and industry partners.

"We founded StoreDot to achieve what many said could never be done – develop batteries capable of delivering a full charge in just five minutes," says Dorn Myersdorf, CEO of StoreDot.

"We have shown this level of extreme fast charging is possible – first in 2019 with an electric scooter and again six months ago with a commercial drone."

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SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Alan Bastey, customer relationship director at Zenith

Providing workplace charging has many benefits, but it takes planning and strategy to reap the rewards. Implementing a workplace charging infrastructure allows businesses to be seen as innovators and socially responsible by investors, customers and employees; it demonstrates a commitment as we all move towards net zero emissions.

With workplace charging currently exempt from income tax and national insurance and grants available through the Workplace Charging Scheme, there has never been a better time to add this important component of an environmentally sustainable business.

However, while the convenience and comfort of knowing there's a work charge point would be great for employees and sends a clear signal in support of the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs), access to workplace charging should not be relied on by the average commuter driving 20-30 miles per day. That's why defining a policy and setting boundaries is a must.

Charge points will become extremely popular and ambitions should be carefully considered in the scope of any provision. Free workplace charging is not required to incentivise EV adoption and can lead to over-reliance, and over-demand. Key considerations include prioritisation, visitor access, sharing rules, signage, access limitations and booking systems, to name a few and can be supported through technology. Adopting a tiered payment approach for employees is a great way to moderate demand and to influence behaviour.

A proportionate and well deployed charge point service, with high utilisation, could be funded through energy consumption. Partnering with landlords or other businesses on a shared campus in a co-op venture can reduce costs and enable an increase in the scale of provision.

Start by talking to industry experts, then plan, define a policy and lead the way.

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Range anxiety is not so prevalent; but the new concern is about the time a vehicle takes to charge

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"[Releasing the first production batch of sample cells] marks an important milestone, moving extreme fast-charging for the first time beyond innovation in the lab to a commercially-viable product scalable for mass production.

"This paves the way for the launch of our second-generation, silicon-dominant anode prototype battery for EVs later this year."

Myersdorf says this charging rate has been possible as the company has used metalloids such as silicon in the anode on lithium-ion batteries instead of graphite, which is a key breakthrough in overcoming major issues in safety, battery cycle life and swelling during extreme fast charging.

"Replacing graphite with metalloids is a very serious and important transition in battery technology," he adds.

Myersdorf expects full commercialisation of the technology in 2024-25.

SUPERCAPACITOR SOLUTIONS

StoreDot is not alone in developing EV battery technology which could potentially take on enough charge in five minutes to allow a car to travel 300 miles.

Some companies are looking at the potential of using supercapacitors in EVs instead of batteries.

Like a battery, a supercapacitor is a means to store and release electricity, but rather than storing energy in the form of chemicals, they store electricity in a static state, making them better at rapidly charging and discharging energy.

They are already used in cars with regenerative braking systems as they are well suited to collecting energy generated under braking then quickly releasing it upon acceleration.

However, there are two main disadvantages with using current supercapacitors as the main power source for BEVs: they are not able to store as much energy as lithium-ion batteries and cannot hold their charge for as long either.

> "THE MOST EXPENSIVE BIT ISN'T THE ELECTRICITY, IT'S OUR ENGINEER STANDING THERE IDLE"
>
> **JAMES ROONEY, CENTRICA**

Oxford start-up Carbon-ion is one of the companies developing supercapacitors for potential EV use, and chairman and CEO Stephen Voller says its technology could "provide the same type of refuelling or filling experience that you have with petrol or diesel vehicles, which is a five-minute charge".

He adds: "We use two materials that are unique to us. One is a high surface area carbon and the other is an ionic electrolyte.

"The combination of these two materials allows us to improve the performance of supercapacitors so they can perform in a much more effective way for applications such as EV fast charging.

"The belief is that supercapacitors will replace more batteries and make more things possible that were previously thought impossible."

Carbon-ion's technology is being used in the autonomous pods at Heathrow Airport where they work in a hybrid system alongside standard batteries.

"The carbon-ion pack is located under the seats and charges in about 35 seconds, which is the time it takes for passengers to board the vehicle," says Voller.

"This then charges the batteries while the vehicle is in motion."

While supercapacitors may have the potential to play a significant role in future EVs, lithium-based batteries are expected to dominate the BEV landscape for some time yet.

Lithium-ion batteries are expected to continue to be developed for at least another five years, as their characteristics are well suited to BEVs.

They have a high energy density, which means they can carry a lot of charge, they are low maintenance and they have a low self-discharge, so they will not lose much charge while not in use.

They use three rare earth metals in their construction – lithium, nickel and cobalt – and manufacturers can use different combinations to give the characteristics they want, such as increased capacity, increased safety or lower costs.

Lithium-ion cell performance can be enhanced by adding new combinations of materials such as nickel, iron, manganese, aluminium and silicon.

"The main challenges for the future will be looking at increasing capacity, which can either increase range or it could be used to reduce weight or decrease battery volume," says David Philipson, transport strategy specialist at Cenex.

"Lithium-ion will probably continue to dominate between 2020 and 2025 with solid state batteries coming soon after."

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IMPORTANCE OF RECYCLING

While the use of BEVs hugely benefits local air quality due to having zero tailpipe emissions, the use of rare metals in their batteries does have a negative impact during their production.

Current lithium-ion technology uses rare earth elements such as lithium, nickel and cobalt which can cause pollution when mined.

They are also in short supply and the World Bank has estimated that shortages in nickel and cobalt could emerge as soon as 2025 as demand for them accelerates to meet the need for both EV batteries and for grid storage.

However, research from Oxford Brookes University has found that more than 90% of the UK's requirements for these materials could be met by 2035 by recycling end-of-life EV and energy storage batteries, meaning little new metal would need to be mined.

The university looked at the expected growth in the UK's EVs and potential storage requirement for the grid to balance supply and demand in view of the increased penetration of renewable energy.

"Possible strategies to reduce the severity of these challenges include using vehicles to supplement grid level storage through vehicle-to-grid and re-using the end-of-life EV batteries for second life in grid applications," says Marco Raugei, senior research fellow at Oxford Brookes University.

"Possibly the most important strategy is to maximise recycling at end of life, so we can gradually close the loop on lithium, cobalt and the other key battery metals and thereby reduce the demand for virgin supply of these metals significantly.

"By 2035 this means that more than 90% of the demand for lithium and cobalt for batteries in the UK can potentially be met by recycling end-of-life EV batteries."

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SOLID-STATE OF AFFAIRS

Solid-state batteries could be the next big shift in terms of technology. The liquid electrolyte currently used in lithium-ion cells is replaced by a solid equivalent and this has numerous benefits.

One is they offer enhanced safety as the solid electrolyte is more stable than its liquid counterpart, resulting in simpler energy and thermal management systems and reduced fire risk.

Peter Bruce, principal investigator for the Faraday Institution's Solbat project, which focuses on solid-state batteries, says they potentially have a 60% higher energy density than lithium-ion batteries.

This means, for example, "if you replaced the lithium-ion battery in a Volkswagen e-Golf with a solid-state battery of the same size, it would have a range of 750km (466 miles) compared with its 300km (186 miles) now", he explains.

This could allow manufacturers to offer the same driving range as lithium-ion battery models but use a smaller, lighter solid state battery.

Manufacturers have invested heavily in the technology with, for example, Volkswagen Group investing $300 million (£215m) in American battery start-up QuantamScape, with a pilot factory slated to deliver 1gWh of batteries by 2024.

Toyota plans to debut its first working prototype with a solid state battery sometime this year, with a production car going on sale in the next couple of years. Toyota is jointly developing its battery with Panasonic and had planned to reveal something during the Tokyo Olympics last summer before they were postponed due to the pandemic.

"There are also some disadvantages to solid-state batteries," says Bruce. "It is an unproven technology, the cost may be initially higher, there are still questions about the manufacturability of solid state batteries since they are not already in the marketplace and the underlying science is something which is not very typical in electric chemistry or, indeed, in batteries."

Philipson says the first solid-state batteries could be used by early market adopters before 2025, but it will be between 2025 and 2030 when they "enter the market with a vengeance and are quickly adopted". He says they will start to dominate after 2030 as lithium-ion begins to give up large amounts of market share.

Scientists are also working on other lithium-based battery technologies, such as lithium-sulphur and lithium-air.

Energy Saving Trust says lithium-sulphur has shown promise in terms of battery cost, performance and sustainability.

Sulphur is an abundant and low cost material, replacing expensive materials such as nickel, cobalt and manganese. In addition, the materials have 100% recyclability and possibly 40% to 50% more range in an EV than lithium-ion.

It could be launched between 2030 and 2035, but EST says there are, of course, still some limitations. Currently the technology has a small number of charge cycles before the cells start to break down. During this degradation, the efficiency and stability of the cells are substantially reduced.

Lithium-air is still a relatively new concept and although it is theoretically advantageous, there are many challenges before commercial realisation.

Advantages are that it could have a very high energy density, is safe and uses less cobalt. However, it currently has low efficencies due to secondary reactions and poor oxidisation resistance.

Philipson estimates there will be a R&D breakthrough between 2025 and 2030 and lithium-air will enter the commercial market after 2030.

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Glow on charging cable for illustrative purposes only.

British Gas is ordering Vauxhall Vivaro-e vans in the thousands

FILLING THE GAPS IN THE ELECTRIC VAN MARKET

Manufacturers need to listen to the needs of the sector, says *Rob Anderson*

The UK's light commercial vehicle (LCV) market is on the verge of a dramatic change, as the ripples caused by the 2030 deadline to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans grow into waves.

At my last count there were around 15 electric van models on the market, coming in a variety of styles – from car-derived and chassis cabs, to large vans running at 4.25 tonnes with more than 1,700kg of payload. Available electric range is increasing, too, with some variants achieving more than 200 miles on a single charge.

Availability continues to grow also. This year alone, we are expecting Groupe PSA to offer electric variants of all its vans, Fiat to launch its e-Ducato, and Mercedes-Benz to introduce the eVito and eSprinter. Ford is aiming to enter the electric van market in early 2022 with the e-Transit.

The likes of Mitie, OpenReach, SSE and British Gas have already announced their ambition to operate fully electric van fleets. As a result, British Gas has now bought a further 2,000 Vauxhall Vivaro-e vans to add to the 1,000 it ordered in the summer of 2020. Additionally, other companies, such as Severn Trent, Scottish Water and Amazon, are starting to take steps towards electrifying their own van fleets.

While Nissan and Renault have offered small electric vans for some time, the most recent focus for van electrification has been around the medium-sized segment where cargo volume has been prioritised over available payload. This is great news for those companies and associated sectors noted above, especially if the daily operations return to home (or depot), are not weight constrained and have repeatable journey patterns.

However, the van is a diverse workhorse undertaking a wide variety of tasks, carrying a multitude of different loads, and driving various duty cycles – not to mention the additional requirements of towing, ancillary equipment usage, temperate reduction needs and conversion needs. The result is that there are still gaps in the van market that need filling.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A senior fleet specialist at Cenex, Rob Anderson helps UK public and private sector transport operators to manage their transition to zero and ultra-low emission vehicles.

A key missing piece for many van operators is the ability to tow and, with only two electric vans currently homologated to tow, the choices are limited.

While a good start, the towing capabilities of the Maxus eDeliver 9 (1,500 kg) and the Vauxhall Vivaro-e (1,000 kg), are not sufficient for many operators within the UK van sector and short of what is typically achieved by a diesel variant. This needs to improve, as does the understanding of the impact towing has on the available range of an electric van, before we are to see further uptake.

> "A KEY MISSING PIECE FOR MANY (EV) VAN OPERATORS IS THE ABILITY TO TOW. THE CHOICES ARE LIMITED"

There is better news for temperature-controlled transport; LEVC has recently appointed PanelTex as its conversion partner for the VN5 van, while the likes of Coolvan can convert the Maxus eDeliver 3 and Nissan e-NV200 into refrigerated variants. For each of these, the chiller unit runs from the vehicle's 12v battery, reducing the likely impact on vehicle range by running such units.

Some industry sectors, like utility providers, operate a wide range of commercial vehicles with high onboard energy demands because of heavy ancillary power loads due to the use of specialised equipment such as air compressors and the need to provide power to hand-tools in remote locations.

Typically, the power required for such equipment is supplied through power-take off from the engine meaning the overall efficiency of the vehicle is significantly reduced (not to mention the local air pollution impacts of having to run a diesel engine to provide power).

Thankfully, some vehicle conversion companies can supply a separate onboard battery pack, which can be used to power the ancillary electrical equipment. However, the supply of clean power for ancillary equipment and tools is an area that needs further investigation to ensure that electrification of this sector continues.

While some significant challenges remain to fully electrify the LCV sector, it is hoped that the additional vehicles coming this year will help fill those gaps, especially if manufacturers listen to the needs of the UK van sector.

Wayne Warburton started with a plug-in hybrid five years ago before progressing to a full EV

Country's biggest operator of plug-in company cars

That's Siemens – and the goal is for the company to be carbon-neutral by 2030, says head of UK Mobility Services, Wayne Warburton. *Stephen Briers* reports

Six years ago, Siemens introduced its first plug-in hybrid car onto the fleet. Its first pure electric company cars arrived in 2017.

Today, the business has already tipped the balance of its 2,300-strong car fleet in favour of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs), with more than 1,000 plug-in hybrids (PHEVs), 200 hybrids and 80 battery electrics (BEVs), plus another 30 BEVs on order with demand growing monthly.

According to Fleet200 data from the UK's largest fleets, Siemens is now the country's biggest operator of plug-in company cars.

And that's just the start. Its current car order book is 80% PHEV and 6% BEV. Within the next couple of months, the CO_2 emissions average for the entire fleet, including the 900 light commercial vehicles (LCVs), will drop below 100g/km.

Vans are trailing, though not through a lack of desire. Several parts of the business have taken delivery of their first electric vans, but the complex nature of the journey profiles and lack of range mean the uptake opportunities are currently limited.

Wayne Warburton, Siemens head of UK Mobility Services, has overseen a rapid transformation in the business, one that has been driven from the top. The nature of Siemens business helps – it offers its own charging solutions, for example – but the global mission statement tells the story. Sustainability, it says, "is at the heart of our business activities".

This provided the catalyst in September 2015, when Siemens committed to be carbon-neutral by 2030. Fleet falls within scope one, accounting for half of Siemens UK carbon emissions, while travel sits in scope three.

"We didn't want to offset our emissions, we wanted to reduce them," Warburton says.

The car policy, managed in partnership by leasing provider Lex Autolease, uses an online platform for the drivers and is based on two mileage bands: high and low.

Employees on the low band, travelling fewer than 8,000 business miles a year, are given the option of company car or cash; high band must take a company car. Of the 2,300 company car drivers, a little more than a third (35%) are in the low band.

High band drivers can choose diesel or PHEV, but not electric; low band drivers can only choose PHEV or full electric. The policy was introduced two years ago and has "seen the numbers start to take off", says Warburton.

He adds: "We are about to change our policy to include a medium band which will open up electric to high business mileage drivers. This is where the data is key – car driver travel patterns analysis provides data for drivers, helping them to decide if they could switch to electric. By the end of this year, we will probably have 300 full electric vehicles (EVs)."

Several hundred employees opt for cash, but Siemens is now reviewing the policy in line with its focus on sustainability, not least as the data shows the CO_2 emissions on the cash fleet are far higher than the company fleet.

"Lex is now managing all our cash-taker processes and is starting to share valuable data with us that we can use to align the cash-taker policy to our sustainability goals as a business and also share the benefits of moving back into a company car with the tax advantages that were not available three-to-five years ago," Warburton says.

The fleet team plays an active role in supporting and advising employees about the best options in terms of cost and emissions, beginning with a renewal call nine months before they are due to change.

"We introduced this approach six months ago and it's been very well received," says Warburton. "It's like a helpdesk and it's working – we are seeing the increase in ULEVs."

COMPANY: Siemens plc
HEAD OF MOBILITY SERVICES: Wayne Warburton
TIME IN ROLE: seven years
FLEET SIZE: 3,200 – 2,300 cars; 900 vans
FUNDING METHOD: contract hire via Lex Autolease
OPERATING CYCLE: four years/80,000 miles (optional two or three years on PHEV/BEV)
CASH TAKERS: Several hundred
FLEXI-RENT FLEET: 300

Global tendering has helped to unlock discounts on PHEVs, now reaching a similar level to diesel, while even EVs are starting to see limited discounting.

This is making them far more competitive on a total cost of ownership (TCO) matrix. Over a four-year operating cycle, Warburton has found at lot of EVs to be cheaper than diesel across most comparable models.

"So, there are savings for Siemens as well as the driver and the planet," he says.

"What's making the difference is the maintenance and fuel. As leasing companies get a better understanding of how much cheaper they are to maintain, they are no longer loading the SMR from a risk point of view.

"The main driver, however, is the fuel savings on offer to the employee and the business and by moving to a TCO model this is very apparent in making an EV the sensible choice."

A central part of any EV strategy is the workplace charging infrastructure. Siemens has installed more than 100 charge points across its 12 main sites, with 26 alone at its Manchester head office.

All are 7.4kW chargers, as they met the needs of its PHEVs, although the next round of investment will prioritise 22kW/50kW with a future roadmap already earmarking 150kW for high demand sites. The cabling has been future-proofed to allow upgrades with minimal disruption.

Siemens has two four-hour charging slots, morning/afternoon, via an online booking system to ensure the maximum number of employees are able to charge their cars. Around a quarter of staff with PHEVs have also fitted a home charger at their own expense, although it is not mandatory.

However, anyone choosing a full electric car does have to commit to investing in a home wallbox.

It's not been a deterrent, as the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax savings available for both PHEV and BEV easily make up for the investment in the charger, particularly when the Government grant is taking into consideration.

Plug-in hybrids have proven to be a stepping-stone to full electric, enabling employees to get used to charging their vehicle without worrying about range. Of the 80 drivers with a BEV, more than 80% previously had a PHEV.

"We are definitely seeing PHEV drivers move to full electric on their next car change," Warburton says.

Siemens has also introduced greater flexibility with the leases, potentially further increasing their appeal. The traditional four-year operating cycle has been expanded to include two or three years, although most still

...'for every £1 of cost, we save £5'

Wayne Warburton has been with Siemens for 25 years, the past seven as category manager of Mobility Services.

He sits within the central department for all indirect spend, including fleet, travel, temporary labour, PPE, logistics and office supplies. It pools the demand across Siemens' UK businesses to get the best deals, consolidate suppliers and build strategic relationships.

The core financial KPI is that "for every £1 of cost, we save £5 of money – that's the return on investment that our department brings", Warburton says.

He is responsible for fleet and travel.

The vehicle fleet accounts for the majority of Warburton's time, around 80%, although that increased after three parts of the business – Healthcare, Energy and Spain-based Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy (SGRE) – were separated from the main plc. Each now has its own sustainability manager, increasing the number of stakeholders in fleet.

WARBURTON ON...

...electric cars

Wayne Warburton was one of the first in the business to run a plug-in hybrid car in 2016, using it as a stepping-stone to switch to a full electric Mercedes-Benz EQC four years later.

The EQC's stated range is 259 miles; Warburton has been typically getting 220 miles during summer. He advises other EV drivers against using the heater during winter – it can sap another 20 miles of range.

"They say put the electric seats on, not the heating, because it uses less charge," he says. "Of course, you can also pre-heat the car via the app while it's still on the charger."

He charges via a home charger and uses Zap-Map to track down public charge points, typically using the Ionity network's 350kW units which can fill from 10% to 80% in 20 minutes. Concerns over the public network are largely unfounded, he believes.

Regenerative braking helps to preserve charge, as does running the car in Range Max, the most efficient mode. However, even running it in eco, Warburton is comfortably exceeding 200 miles of range.

"I learned so much having my car, so I can provide advice to others," he says.

opt for the longer period.

Warburton's biggest challenge is the van fleet, where range and availability is "two-to-three years behind cars". Each business unit has a 10-year roadmap to convert the fleet to electric, but vans are home-based, so the priority will be to agree a solution for home charging/billing.

"Some of our business units are targeting 100% electric by 2028 and I can see that happening for cars, but vans are more of a challenge," he says. "The next three-to-four years is when we need to switch a lot of those vehicles over."

Telematics data will play an important role in identifying the vans which can be changed first. It will also underpin a process change: Siemens currently allocates the nearest van to a job; in future it will need to overlay this with available range to ensure the driver can get there and back.

It's all part of a five-year learning curve for Warburton and Siemens, one which underlines the changing role of the decision-maker – not least the importance of using data.

"The fleet manager role is not about leasing and managing drivers any more; you need different skill sets. You have to work with HR, with real estate and with sustainability. You have to understand charging requirements. You have to be more strategically linked with suppliers – they are learning too, but they have a lot of knowledge," Warburton says.

"It is no longer enough to do a policy review every three or four years. We look at our policy every 12 months using data to facilitate decision-making. Without data, you are making decisions blind, but you also have to be able to present it in the right way to senior management.

"Here, we are supported by our leasing provider and their team of consultants and a dedicated fleet analyst to ensure all this data tells the right story to these key stakeholders."

A fleet steering committee brings together supply chain, HR, health and safety and directors from the four main business units for quarterly meetings.

"Two years ago, the agenda was dominated by cost and safety, but that's now the bread and butter," Warburton adds. "Today, 90% of the discussion is on sustainability."

Sustainability also means looking beyond fleet to mobility solutions – another example of the diversifying role of the fleet manager where travel and fleet responsibilities are merging.

As the category manager for UK Mobility Services, Warburton is constantly assessing new services under the mobility as a solution (MaaS) umbrella. His report so far? "There are some good solutions out there, but it's not quite ready yet."

Fast-forward a decade or two, however, and with growing urbanisation, "many people won't even want a car – it'll be a monthly travel allowance and a system that can book end-to-end travel, from train to e-scooter or ride hail".

This mobility evolution will begin within the next two-to-three years, with added impetus coming from councils under pressure to improve local air quality. It will be a fundamental shift, but with the greatest impact on user-choosers rather than vans and high mileage business drivers.

Siemens has a couple of MaaS pilots underway in Germany and Belgium, both countries more suited to a mass roll-out of mobility services than the UK: Belgium because of its train network and high bicycle ownership; Germany due to the proliferation of car hire companies offering solutions.

The double whammy of Covid and Brexit has stifled progress in the UK, but Warburton hopes to launch his own trial later this year with a small number of employees. He predicts MaaS will be more of a localised and location-based service than a national offering.

"I don't see MaaS being offered *carte blanche*," he says. "It will be offered to select individuals and linked to certain cities, such as London and Manchester, which have e-bikes and so on.

"There's no point in giving people a mobility package if all they can do is book a train. It will be location-dependent."

Rivus plots course to become 'strongest player in the market'

After an initial focus on costs and processes, the company says 'now is the time for growth'. *Stephen Briers* reports

Eighteen months after private equity group Aurelius acquired BT Fleet Solutions, the company is now ready to go toe-to-toe with its biggest rivals as it plots to become "the strongest player in the market".

After rebranding the business as Rivus Fleet Solutions (Latin for river), Aurelius spent the next few months carving out IT and back office systems from BT Group and looking at ways to remove cost. This resulted in a reduction in the garage network, from 65 to 55 sites. All were unprofitable, according to Aurelius operating partner and Rivus chief development officer Michael Scheidler.

"After we looked at cost, we focused on strategic developments and creating stable, efficient and modern processes. Now it is time for growth," he says.

"Our strategy is organic and non-organic growth looking at horizontal and vertical opportunities – anything that fits with the business plan to widen our product portfolio or plug gaps. We want to be the strongest player in the market."

Aurelius has already made its next move, with the purchase of truck management business Pullman Fleet Services from Wincanton four month ago. The business will work alongside Rivus, sharing synergies and offering joint propositions for customers, but with no plans for full integration.

"Our strategy is to have a rounded offer to provide all key services a fleet needs for all types of vehicle," says Scheidler. "Rivus's main focus is light commercial vehicles (LCVs); Pullman enhances the proposition with HGVs – it gives us a one-stop shop."

A new management team has been assembled headed by David Myers, who was appointed chief executive officer in November 2020. Notably, it's his first fleet role after senior positions at Wolseley, Aggreko and Tyco, where he was at the opposite end of the spectrum as a company car driver.

Myers has embraced virtual technology to meet as many Rivus customers as possible to understand their challenges, their view of the business and their future strategies. It has helped him form a clear perspective on their priorities.

> "OUR STRATEGY IS TO HAVE A ROUNDED OFFER TO PROVIDE ALL KEY SERVICES A FLEET NEEDS"
>
> **MICHAEL SCHEIDLER, AURELIUS/RIVUS**

Rivus's main focus is on the LCV market

"From a customer point of view, our priority is to develop an excellent service, including processes, insights and consultancy," he says. "They are under cost pressures and we have to simplify our relationships, including the provision of information and technology, to help them manage their costs.

"Their needs are evolving, and we have to be able to help them on that journey by having the solutions, either current or planned, to make it happen."

Rivus has set out three development strands: electric vehicle (EV) transition (see panel), digital transformation – including customer apps, self-service tools and data insight – and product innovation, such as funding.

THE SMR BEDROCK

While service, maintenance and repair (SMR) and fleet management is the bedrock upon which BT Group build the Fleet Solutions business, Rivus is spreading its wings, taking advantage of services historically only offered to BT.

"We have invested in our accident management proposition but also funding and leasing which we already do for BT. We have developed a proposition and we are starting to get successful," Scheidler says.

The proposition includes both operating lease and finance lease with a panel of banks providing the funding. Rivus has already signed up a handful of customers and Scheidler is confident more will follow.

Funding, he says, offers growth opportunities but also protects the existing business.

"We've seen a movement from self-finance to funding and our traditional business of fleet management and SMR could erode if we don't offer a funding option," Scheidler explains. "It's important for our total proposition."

Data will also play a vital role in supporting customers and Rivus is working on its digital roadmap. This will include evaluating how it can use telematics insight for proactive maintenance, enabling all work to be carried out as part of a scheduled service.

It recognises that companies are increasingly demanding flexibility from their partners, as the issues caused by the Covid pandemic create uncertainty across the industry.

Myers says: "There will be a lot of pressure on being flexible, where customers won't want long-term contracts. Fleet managers are facing a lot of

COMPANY: Rivus Fleet Solutions
KEY EXECS: Michael Scheidler, Aurelius partner and Rivus chief development officer; David Myers, chief executive officer
FLEET SIZE: Rivus – 85,000; Pullman – 35,000
GARAGE NETWORK: Rivus – 55; Pullman 25
MOBILE SERVICES: 30 technicians

David Myers sees a lot of opportunity in the mid-market

complexity and part of that is the analytical insights from managing a mixed fleet of EVs and diesels – technologies that behave differently and challenges the way vehicles are driven."

Scheidler adds: "Different financing models, cost pressures, less cap ex, movements towards TaaS (transport as a service) – it's all about flexibility. There's also outsourcing as more customers want to hand fleet management to an expert business."

Rivus has extensive experience to draw on, with 85,000 vehicles under fleet management (BT Group, the largest, accounts for around 32,000 vehicles). Its historic strength has been blue-chip corporates, plus local business where customers are close to the garages. Pullman, meanwhile, adds another 35,000 vehicles.

WIDENING FLEET SIZES

As Rivus improves its process efficiencies, introducing self-serve and automated services, the customer pool will widen to any size fleet, although remaining focused on mixed commercial fleets.

Myers puts the growth aspirations into "three buckets": local market, medium size and bespoke, larger fleets.

"We've been successful in the bespoke and local markets, but we are less widespread in the mid-market," he says. "So that's where we see a lot of the opportunity."

As a private equity owner, Aurelius has clear objectives for Rivus; chief among them is increasing value by driving revenues and profits. Eighteen months in and the progress report is looking "pretty good", says Scheidler.

"We hardly lost any business from BT Fleet Solutions and we have secured some contracts that were up," he says. "We have separated our systems and we are now standalone. We are making progress on innovation and, overall, we are happy with our position. We are where we should be."

AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE 'ONE-STOP SHOP'

Rivus is developing an "overarching" EV proposition so it can "hold customers by the hand" as they transition to an electric fleet.

"We intend to provide all aspects of EV in a one-stop solution, including the vehicle with a maintenance package, but also telematics, driver training, ongoing data-based optimisation and a charging solution," says David Myers.

"We are in consultation with a number of European charging suppliers to evaluate the best option to support our customers requirements today and tomorrow."

The service starts with a consultation to assess the opportunity to switch vehicles to electric and identifying the appropriate ones. Rivus can also assist in the procurement process and provide the engineering expertise to test the vehicle is fit for purpose, including payloads and range.

"We take a wholelife cycle perspective," Myers says. "But we also have a garage network that is EV-capable and we are training them further."

At present, around 30 of the 55 garages are EV-ready, for most vehicle types, with more to follow. Technicians have embarked on rigorous training programmes to Institute of the Motor Industry standards.

Recent agreements to provide aftersales support to electric van maker LEVC and premium EV carmaker Fisker (due to enter the UK in 2023) will accelerate plans to bring the rest of the network up to speed.

However, it's not a straightforward process. "Each customer has its own policies about how they want to work; for example, collecting the car from the garage with a minimum level of charge," says Myers. "Different dynamics come into play, with customers themselves defining what EV readiness is."

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2. PERSONAL RECOGNITION; CAREER ENHANCING
3. GET AHEAD OF YOUR COMPETITORS
4. A RISE IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & MOTIVATION
5. POSITIVE PRESS COVERAGE
6. INCREASED CUSTOMER AWARENESS

By Stephen Briers

Fleets, suppliers and manufacturers have two weeks to go before the deadline passes for the Fleet News Awards 2021.

With new categories and a merger with the Commercial Fleet Awards, the 2021 event will bring together for the first time car, van and truck to recognise and honour excellence across every part of the fleet sector.

Winning a Fleet News Awards trophy doesn't come easy, but the effort is worth every moment. Studies show that winners enjoy a measurable improvement in business performance and credibility, while it can also raise staff motivation.

Group fleet manager Shaun Atton described himself as "proud" and "over the moon" after collecting the most improved fleet of the year trophy for Auto Windscreens at last year's Fleet News Awards. British Gas head of fleet Steve Winter, who won the fleet of the year gong, said it was "a great reward for our fleet team".

He added: "It demonstrated we are correct in our strategy and has given us the ability to forge ahead with our ambitious plans."

Winning can give a boost to individual careers, with several former winners getting promoted or headhunted for more senior positions. Winners say it has also helped them to acquire new talent and improve client relationships.

Three-time winner Nigel Morris, electric vehicle & V2X integration manager at Active Building Centre, Swansea University (fleet champion, environmental fleet and travel/mobility initiative), said the recognition was "really, really important".

It also gave him "a weapon to use" to get additional funding for future initiatives within the organisation, while the marketing team was able to get positive publicity in the local media.

Matt Hammond, UK fleet and transport manager, Altrad Services (safe fleet of the year), said: "To be acknowledged at such a prestigious and high profile event by both peers and industry professionals gave us the confirmation that all the hard work was paying off, as well as being seen to be setting a standard within the industry."

It's not just the winners who bask in the glory of the Fleet News Awards. Being shortlisted for a fleet category, for example, is about more than a pat on the back for the fleet decision-maker; it raises the profile of the company brand with existing and potential customers.

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

To enter the awards, head to the website now: awards.fleetnews.co.uk. Deadline for entries is April 9.

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

AWARDS 2021 TIMELINE

- **NOW** – Entries open. Go to the awards website – fleetnewsawards.com
- **9 APRIL 2021** – Entry deadline for all categories (no extensions)
- **11 MAY 2021** – Judging day for manufacturer awards
- **12 MAY 2021** – Judging day for supplier awards
- **19-20 MAY 2021** – Fleet manager interviews/judging take place
- **27 MAY 2021** – Shortlist revealed in *Fleet News*

THE JUDGES

FLEET AWARDS

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

SUPPLIER AWARDS

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

MANUFACTURER AWARDS

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

HEADLINE AWARDS

Judges as above, relevant to the category

We are considering a number of options for the Fleet News Awards celebration including a summer BBQ party and a virtual event. We're determined to do all we can to host the awards live – you've told us that's what you prefer – but we will be led by Government guidelines. We will provide regular updates to guests and sponsors over the coming weeks. To register your interest in a live summer party, go to www.fleetnewsawards.com

SUMMER 2021
Winners revealed

THE CATEGORIES

FLEET AWARDS

Excellence in Fleet Safety
2020 winner: Altrad Services

Environmental Innovation
Sponsored by Ogilvie Fleet
2020 winner: Active Building Centre – Swansea University

Mobility Achievement of the Year
2020 winner: Active Building Centre – Swansea University

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

Fleet of the Year (up to 1,000 vehicles)
2020 winner: Eric Wright Group

Fleet of the Year (more than 1,000 vehicles)
Sponsored by Zenith
2020 winner: British Gas

SUPPLIER AWARDS

Leasing Company of the Year (up to 20,000 vehicles)
2020 winner: Ogilvie Fleet

Leasing Company of the Year (more than 20,000 vehicles)
Sponsored by Aston Barclay
2020 winner: Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions

Rental Company of the Year
Sponsored by Grosvenor Contracts
2020 winner: Enterprise

Outstanding Product or Service
New category

Fleet Customer Partnership Award
2020 winner: Fleet Service GB

Fleet Dealer of the Year
2020 winner: Johnsons Fleet Services

Innovation in Mobility Technology Award
2020 winner: Fleetondemand

MANUFACTURER AWARDS

Best Small Van
New category

Best Medium Van
New category

Best Large Van
New category

Rigid Truck of the Year (six-16 tonnes)
New category

Rigid Truck of the Year (more than 16 tonnes)
New category

Best Small Car
2020 winner: Peugeot 208

Best Lower Medium Car
2020 winner: Ford Focus

Best Upper Medium Car
2020 winner: Škoda Superb

Best Compact SUV
2020 winner: Peugeot 2008

Best Mid-size SUV
2020 winner: Toyota Rav4

Best Compact Premium Car
2020 winner: BMW 1 Series

Best Premium Car
2020 winner: BMW 3 Series

Best Executive Car
2020 winner: BMW 5 Series

Best Zero Emission Van
New category

Best Plug-in Hybrid Car
New category

Best Zero Emission Car
2020 winner: Kia e-Niro

Most Improved Manufacturer
2020 winner: Suzuki GB

HEADLINE AWARDS

Fleet Supplier of the Year
2020 winner: Reflex Vehicle Hire

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Car (Reader voted)
2020 winner: BMW Group UK

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Van (Reader voted)
New category

Fleet Manufacturer of the Year – Truck (Reader voted)
New category

Fleet Manager of the Year
2020 winner: Stewart Taylor, Police Scotland

Fleet News Hall of Fame
Sponsored by The AA
2020 winner: Liz Hollands

2021 sponsors

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OPTIMISE YOUR DAILY RENTAL USAGE

These six key steps will help fleet managers make the most of rental vehicle deployment. *Andrew Don* reports

Daily rental is a key tool for an organisation looking to operate an efficient and effective fleet. It can be used to provide vehicles for carrying durations, offering greater flexibility for organisations whose work consists of fixed term contracts. It can also be used to provide cars for new starters while their is on order.

Rental can also help increase the utilisation of an organisation's fleet – paying for a vehicle when it's needed is potentially attractive rather than leaving excess assets to rest idly.

A clear contract with a daily rental supplier should be far simpler and more economical than managing a grey fleet. It will also give the company peace of mind over duty of care requirements. It should provide environmental benefits, too, for those who wish to be seen to be doing the right thing.

The following six key steps should ensure businesses optimise daily rental use:

STEP 01: USE IT WHEN NEEDED

However, under-utilisation of company vehicles is wasteful and expensive. Instead of renting a vehicle, a company may be keeping spare company cars or pool cars available which it uses to meet additional capacity requirements.

Clive Forsythe, commercial director, Europcar Mobility Group UK, points out that this can put undue pressure on an organisation's fleet budget and tie up precious cash resources.

Forsythe says: "With economic uncertainty continuing well into 2021, an optimised vehicle fleet that can be changed as requirements vary will be key to ongoing success for many businesses."

Daily rental vehicles can be used to fill any gaps, while flexible long-term rental addresses this need particularly well, providing access to a range of up-to-date vehicles, but without the need for a long-term financial commitment.

Rental is a more agile alternative to leasing or outright purchase because it gives businesses the flexibility to bring in vehicles when they are needed and to hand them back when they are no longer required, he says.

It also takes the headache out of managing grey fleet because fleet managers can be assured employees are driving a safe, reliable and up-to-date vehicle.

> "RENTAL IS A MORE AGILE ALTERNATIVE, IT GIVES BUSINESSES THE FLEXIBILITY TO BRING IN VEHICLES WHEN THEY ARE NEEDED"
>
> **CLIVE FORSYTHE, EUROPCAR MOBILITY GROUP UK**

STEP 02: SELECT THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

Northgate Vehicle Hire says the following factors will influence rental supplier choice:

- **Scale and scope – a supplier that takes time to understand your needs and has the expertise, experience and resources to provide the correct vehicles and services.**
- **Speed at which a vehicle can be sourced.**
- **Location – are the locations both numerous and convenient?**
- **Delivery – does the hire company offer delivery and collection services and what is included in the price?**

Northgate sales and marketing director Neil McCrossan points out, for example, that his company's vans come with servicing, maintenance, road tax and 24/7 breakdown cover included as standard.

The next consideration is whether to use one hire company or several. As with leasing, using one supplier can result in stronger partnerships and simplified administration; however, companies with a variety of vehicle needs might use a couple of suppliers to get the best service.

Admin considerations include keeping track of maintenance events and any required servicing, for example, according to McCrossan.

Using one supplier makes it easier to keep track of your vehicles and drivers can be done simply and effectively. Administration and paperwork for the fleet would be in one place, aiding compliance.

"Always knowing who to contact and that there will be someone on hand, whatever the query, is exactly what is required," says McCrossan.

STEP 03:

RENT THE RIGHT VEHICLE

While most fleet decision-makers will have good understanding about their individual business needs, it can be helpful to consult with rental experts to ensure the vehicles are fit for purpose. This can be particularly helpful when it comes to electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles.

McCrossan says such experts will consider the intended use of the vehicle and will help find the best one for the job rather than have customers doing all the research themselves.

This could mean, for example, they take into account the number of passengers likely to be in the vehicle and the distance to be travelled, to ensure a small and fuel efficient car could be used, possibly saving money on the rental.

Paul McCorkell, head of business rental UK and Ireland at Enterprise, emphasises how important it is to have control measures in place to ensure when employees 'self-serve', they remain compliant with their company's travel policy.

Today's top priorities, in light of the pandemic, are vehicle hygiene and safety, he adds, and fleets should check supplier policies carefully for how vehicles are sanitised between each rental and how this complies with Government guidelines.

McCorkell says when a booking platform is linked to the customer's company travel policy and to real-time vehicle options, it can deliver complete policy compliance in terms of requirements such as size of vehicle and fuel type.

"At the same time, it compares the cost of using daily rental with car club or a grey fleet option, checks the employee's insurance and documentation for a grey fleet journey and ensures the correct authorisations and health and safety considerations, especially single occupancy, are in place," adds McCorkell.

STEP 04: USE THE RIGHT TYPE OF RENTAL

Daily rental used to be exactly that: rent a vehicle for a day or more with the price based on a daily rate. Hire for much more than a few days and the service started to become costly.

However, with the growth in competitive alternatives from car club operators, all rental companies started to expand their offerings, with products including med-term rental – typically three months or month – and minimum-term products, usually 12 months of more.

These longer-term products start to move rental providers into the traditional leasing sector.

The likes of Enterprise, Hertz and Europcar also began to launch or acquire car club operators, adding subscription-based services to their product portfolios.

Companies now have the option of everything from per-hour to per-year rental, enabling them to improve utilisation by matching their vehicles to their daily business needs.

While most fleets continue to use rental companies to supplement their traditional company vehicle schemes, some have switched wholesale from leasing to rental, claiming the added flexibility and no-penalties for handing vehicles back early more than offset any increase in cost.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Neil McCrossan, Sales & Marketing Director – Northgate Vehicle Hire

If anyone doubted the benefits of maintaining flexibility in company vehicle fleets, the last year has surely driven home the importance.

Flexibility has gone from being a desirable feature of fleet planning to an essential element. We've seen many customers use our subscription services model to flex fleet sizes significantly.

We've also helped customers change the composition and mix of fleets to match altered circumstances. Ownership and contract hire fleet models lack the flexibility to dynamically vary fleet size and mix in this way. Customers tell us they recognise lifetime cost and cashflow benefits from our pay-for-what-you-use subscription options.

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Replacement vehicles, breakdown cover, inspection apps, risk management, driver training, and cost-saving fuel cards are among the range of support services provided to customers across their whole fleet.

There is massive interest in electric vehicles (EVs). We help customers cut through the noise. We can provide expert consultative advice covering all aspects of operating EVs. We provide solutions identifying the most suitable e-LCV for the role, the charging infrastructure needed in both commercial and domestic settings, power supply deals and management, to driver training and advice. Everything, in fact, that you need to help switch to electric when you're ready.

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With our flexible account managed solution, we look after vehicles for whole of life, taking away the burden of administration, minimising vehicle downtime, reducing fleet costs and saving you time

Accident Management

Deal with incidents across your fleet, from notification through to insurance and repair using a single phone number

Telematics

Know where your vans are at all times, improve driver behaviour and effective route planning to reduce fuel costs

Risk Management

Fleet risk audits, driver risk assessments and tailored driving courses available

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Drive down fleet fuel spend with a fuel card solution that gives you money off the pump price

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STEP 05: RENT FOR THE RIGHT DURATION

The pandemic has led to businesses having to balance driving efficiency with the higher priority of guaranteeing safe, clean transport for 'essential' employees who still need to drive to work, says Enterprise.

Long-term daily rental delivers against both these goals, says McCorkell, because it provides flexibility and also delivers efficiencies that enable employees to have access to a dedicated vehicle for a more prolonged time so they have peace of mind.

"Analysing data means efficiencies are still possible, although we find too many businesses lack a data-driven understanding of employee travel behaviour," he says.

An example of this is the employee who has a journey that starts in the morning but finishes by mid-afternoon. They could rent the vehicle at 5pm from their local branch the day before, rather than taking a more costly out-of-hours delivery, McCorkell explains.

Northgate says it appreciates it is not always easy to estimate the rental term in advance and business needs can change. The company has a package that enables customers to return vehicles when they have finished with them and swap vehicles during the hire duration if change is required.

"Ensuring you have chosen the right hire package for your anticipated needs will help you make the most of your hire and at the minimum cost," says McCrossan.

Customers can collect vans from a local branch, but Northgate also offers a delivery and collection service. "Our Flexible Hire package also means you can return the vehicle early if it is no longer required."

> "TOO MANY BUSINESSES LACK A DATA-DRIVEN UNDERSTANDING OF EMPLOYEE TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR"
>
> **PAUL McCORKELL, ENTERPRISE**

STEP 06: AVOID PENALTY CHARGES

If a fleet and driver are not careful, penalty charges can quickly add up and negate the cost benefits of hiring the most suitable and fuel-efficient vehicle for the job.

To avoid these charges, which potentially cover areas such as damage and excess mileage, the fleet decision-maker should require the hire company to outline what is and is not included from the outset.

This transparency is key to managing penalty charges.

However, as Europcar points out, the reality is that vehicle rental involves humans, and, where humans are involved, there is the chance of things not going according to plan.

This is where extra costs are often incurred, from damage and road traffic fines to vehicles being returned without a full tank of fuel.

"It's essential we provide transparency over how additional charges are calculated because the business travel or fleet manager is one step removed from the rental itself," says Forsythe.

The company uses, wherever possible, digital, handheld technology for time/date stamped, digital image capture to provide genuine transparency of the vehicle condition.

"That gives our customers greater certainty about the damage/fuel charges they may receive," says Forsythe.

Europcar also gives fleet and corporate customers the ability to accurately forecast costs with its Limited Damage Option and Limited Fuel Option services.

These services reduce the administrative burden of extra charges, negating the need for management of small-value claims, says Forsythe.

Northgate's rentable standards cover the vehicle standard customers can expect when hiring and also its expectations when the hire vehicle is returned.

"Always inspect the vehicle when you pick it up to ensure that any existing damage has already been highlighted," says McCrossan.

> "ALWAYS INSPECT THE VEHICLE WHEN YOU PICK IT UP TO ENSURE ANY EXISTING DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN HIGHLIGHTED"
>
> **NEIL McCROSSAN, NORTHGATE**

NEW DfT BENCHMARKING TOOL FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT LAUNCHED

Supported by *Fleet News,* Driving for Better Business and Roadsafe, benchmarking will help UK businesses to manage risk and improve safety. *David Williams* reports

Managing road risk – which is at the heart of a new Department for Transport (DfT)-backed benchmarking programme for fleets, in partnership with *Fleet News,* Driving for Better Business and Roadsafe – has never been a subject to quicken the pulse. Often it struggles for space on the boardroom agenda.

Attracting dedicated professionals and fleet managers to road safety conferences, seminars or discussion groups is one thing. But getting the message across to a wider audience and out to drivers can be a challenge. Often it feels as though you're going round and round in circles.

The new DfT project, which formally launches this month, will help managers to overcome this hurdle by allowing organisations to measure and contrast their achievements against others. This will give them the ammunition to dramatically improve their own performance.

Central to the programme will be a new fleet benchmarking calculator which will sit as part of a trio of online tools available on the Driving for Better Business (DfBB) website to help firms improve their business performance.

Among the first organisations invited to use the benchmarking tool will be those registered as part of the DfBB community which comprises more than 100 employers, collectively managing in excess of 1.1 million drivers, and members of the *Fleet News* Fleet200 membership programme.

They will be joined by customers from FleetCheck, Webfleet and Geotab, who have also been closely involved in the project.

The DfBB suite of tools facilitates a circular process of improvement. Benchmarking sits as the primary entry point to this process and asks the critical first question: Do I need to improve?

By allowing organisations to see how they fare when key metrics are set against the performance of their peers, it becomes clear how they measure against both a user average benchmark and a good practice benchmark.

Step two is to ask: If I need to improve, where do I start? Going through a detailed Gap Analysis highlights the areas that could deliver the required improvements to raise the organisation's benchmarking scores.

Once the gaps have been identified, the third question is: How do I take action?

> "WHILE YOU'LL STILL BE GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES, AT LEAST THEY'LL BE PRODUCTIVE ONES"

For this, DfBB has invested in some major improvements to its resources section to provide targeted help for each question in the online Gap Analysis.

Having implemented the improvements and given them time to bed in, it's time to return to the start of the circle and ask the final question: How big was the improvement? Thus, the process starts again.

"In my opinion, there is no such thing as a perfectly run fleet," says Simon Turner, DfBB campaign manager. "I don't know a single fleet manager who would make such a claim – even the ones who manage risk to a very high standard. It's a constantly evolving project for most, and, as a fleet grows and improves, new and different challenges may well start to appear.

"Successful fleet risk management is about constantly measuring, analysing, tweaking and monitoring – which is what we've designed this new system to help with.

"It starts with the benchmarking tool to help fleet operators compare their performance to others. One of the challenges for benchmarking has always been the fact that businesses define, measure and report different metrics in different ways. We've pulled together a group of fleet experts to design a set of metrics that most organisations would be able to work with – information they should readily have to hand. Our benchmarking tool then converts that information into ratios that are easily comparable with other fleets."

DO I NEED TO IMPROVE?

The figures fleets are able to benchmark are comprehensive. From the data entered, the system will calculate:

- Incidents per million miles
- Average cost per incident
- Average incident cost per vehicle
- Average maintenance cost per mile
- Average maintenance cost per vehicle
- Average fuel cost per mile

These metrics will differentiate efficient, well-run fleets from those that are being managed less effectively.

A key feature of the benchmarking tool is the segmentation of the data by vehicle type, which enables a far more accurate comparison, including powered two-wheelers, cars, vans/light commercial vehicles, heavy goods vehicles and passenger-carrying vehicles.

BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW WHETHER YOU'RE DOING WELL OR NOT?

"We really wanted to show two benchmarks in this system," says Turner. "The first is being able to compare your performance to the all-user average in the system. This gives organisations a clear indication of where they sit as part of the whole picture – are they above or below average?

"But that, in itself, is only part of the picture and doesn't help them determine if where they are is good enough.

"The second benchmark is to compare themselves against good practice. For that we have recruited a broad range of fleets, of different sizes and from different sectors, who we know manage their work-related road risk to a high standard. Their combined average sets the benchmark for good practice.

"As we move forward, we will continue to monitor and update the good practice benchmark, and would like to see that improve over time, but what we're really interested in is how we can help raise the all-user average at a faster rate, so it moves close to good practice."

I NEED TO IMPROVE. WHERE DO I START?

Having determined where your fleet sits when compared with others, it's time to identify where to start looking for improvement. The DfBB Gap Analysis identifies all the things that well-run fleets look at – and not just legally required, but the good practice management systems that deliver the higher levels of performance.

HOW DO I TAKE ACTION?

Driving for Better Business has relaunched the resources section of its website to provide a much greater range of tools, guides, advice and examples of good practice, and to make them more easily accessible.

In the final report, each of the questions in the Gap Analysis is now able to pre-filter these resources to help risk managers get to the most useful resources quickly and start to fill in the gaps and improvement the way their management systems.

As well as information to help managers, a new section of resources has been introduced that is dedicated to driver knowledge, including PDFs, weblinks and videos which can be shared with employees to raise awareness of important issues.

"We are conscious that we continuously encourage managers to engage their drivers on all these safety-related issues, but not everyone has the expertise to do this, and those that do have the knowledge often don't have the time or internal resource to produce what is needed, " says Turner.

"What we've created in each section of resources is a button to filter the ones that are suitable for drivers so you can instantly find downloads or videos to share with them on topics from fatigue and driver distraction to vehicle roadworthiness and van loading limits."

BACK TO BENCHMARKING

With gaps identified and improvement now underway, it won't be long before the fleet is back at the benchmarking tool to see how effective their work has been and how much closer they are to the good practice benchmark – at which point the whole process begins again in a quest for further improvement.

To facilitate this continuous journey, the system offers the opportunity to save up to five consecutive years' worth of results so that, as well as comparing current year results against other fleets, managers can track their own trends over time.

So, while you'll still be going round in circles, at least they'll be productive ones, and the expectation is that you will find that you and your fleet are performing a little bit better each time around.

■ **To start your benchmarking journey, go to www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/benchmarking**

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JUNE 23-24 2021

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CCIA 2021 will coincide with the year of the electric vehicle, with more models launching and supplies no longer restricted. We expect these cars and vans to dominate the show. It will be your best opportunity to make key decisions about which electric brands and models are right for your fleet and we will support you in making those decisions by offering best practice advice from industry experts. Put the date in your diary now.

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT SUPPLIER

The latest deals, newest technologies and best advice from eight sectors that supply services to fleets

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Look for right cultural fit with lease companies, not short-term savings

Consider the wholelife costs because initial savings may be dwarfed further down the line

Explore how leasing companies apply their 'laws' when the time comes to hand back the keys

ISTOCK.COM/SIPHOTOGRAPHY

By Jonathan Manning

The appointment of a new contract hire or leasing supplier presents the potential pitfall of acquiring a commodity when a fleet is, in reality, seeking a service. If a fleet manager focuses exclusively on price, short-term rental savings may be immediately apparent. But measure the wholelife cost of the contract and any initial economies risk being dwarfed by subsequent direct and indirect expenditure.

An expert leasing partner can not only advise on the most cost-effective vehicles to meet a fleet's needs, but also offer solutions to prevent cost savings slipping through the net via early termination fees, wear and tear recharges and excess mileage payments.

> "ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF PURCHASING AGREEMENTS IS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FLEETS TO WORK ACROSS CATEGORIES"
>
> **KIM HARRISON, CCS**

At first glance, leasing and contract hire may appear similar, but companies adopt different approaches to implementing the letter of their 'laws', with some showing much greater flexibility in areas such as mileage pooling, damage recharges and contract extensions.

For these reasons, commercial director of fleet management company CLM Andy Short recommends fleets undertake an honest appraisal of their own operations, identifying where they incur costs beyond the core monthly rental.

"We know, for example, that if a client has a reasonable churn of staff and finds the reallocation of vehicles difficult then terminations are likely, and we have a view around which lease company in our Smartpanel Funding will be more flexible in terms of the solution they put in," says Short.

He encourages fleets to explore whether a potential leasing supplier offers the right cultural fit – are they people you can work with? – and to assess whether it can deliver the level of driver and fleet manager support required? Does one company, for instance, offer online booking and collection and delivery for servicing, while another relies on telephone calls and requires drivers to go to the garage?

It's also vital to consider pricing throughout the duration of a contract, says Short.

"In its rawest form, leasing is lending money at a certain price against a certain risk point over a certain period of time and mileage, and that is quite straightforward to walk through today for a basket of vehicles," he adds.

But it's much harder to predict for three or four years' time as the market ebbs and flows. So you have to review funders on a six-monthly basis to ensure the right competitive tension is still there and that there isn't price creep."

In its broader form, vehicle leasing has become an umbrella for a plethora of services including service and maintenance, breakdown assistance, accident management, replacement vehicles, daily rental and licence checks.

This breadth of services serves as a reminder that it can be hugely beneficial for fleets not to treat leasing as a silo, but to link other parties in the chain.

At Crown Commercial Service (CCS), which negotiates procurement frameworks on behalf of public sector and not-for-profit organisations, Kim Harrison, senior category lead, fleet, says "one of the cornerstones of the purchasing agreements is the opportunity for fleets to work across categories".

She adds: "We know the vast majority of public sector fleets lease their vehicles, but we don't want them to miss out on the value we have negotiated from dealing with manufacturers directly. So, we have a formal legal mechanism in our agreement that says on behalf of our customers the leasing companies can access the really good discounts we can get from the manufacturer and pass them on in the lease."

For the 8,000-plus organisations that buy vehicles and fleet services through the CCS, with an annual spend in excess of £1 billion, the frameworks cover the background checks and due diligence that any fleet should undertake on a potential leasing supplier, providing "all the starting point terms and conditions, which means the customer doesn't have to think about them", she says.

Private sector fleets don't have this luxury, although selecting a leasing company that is a member of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) offers a shortcut to a business that has signed up to a strict code of conduct for each stage of the leasing process, from quotations to in-contract support and end-of-contract procedures.

It also provides for a dispute resolution service should a contract not go smoothly.

Zenith
Intelligent Vehicle Solutions

A ZENITH PARTNERSHIP

The pandemic has meant that many companies are reviewing their fleet policies to ensure that they are fit for purpose for the next decade. It has also proven to be a force for change with some clear, positive trends emerging.

DRIVING FLEETS FORWARD

We never stand still. It's what our customers can depend on.

Throughout the last 12 months, resilience, proactivity and agility has been required to find the best possible solution for our customers.

Our customer relationship management team has worked closely with customers to identify **over 450 policy changes**, resulting in customer saving opportunities of up to **£7 million.**

But it's not just about the savings; we focus on long-term strategy, which means we're always looking for more ways to deliver fleet efficiency in line with business objectives, it's just what we do.

SERVICE COMES FIRST

As the UK's leading independent leasing provider, we have a big role to play in keeping the UK up and running.

Our values are at the heart of our culture and help us bring out the best in what we do: innovative, passionate, agile, proud, driven and honest.

Underpinned by our values, our people go to extraordinary lengths to ensure our customers and drivers are fully supported. Every hour. Every day.

This starts with making sure you have a fleet that's right for your needs, from the numbers and type of vehicles, to the funding method, or blend of methods. With Zenith, you get access to all of this, in one place. To find the right blend, we carry out real-time online calculations on a whole life cost basis.

In today's ever-changing environment, it's also essential that fleets have a way to tune in to government announcements to guide future strategy. It's important to partner with a provider that feeds back relevant information, whilst taking care of lobbying, analysis, consultation reviews and networking to help shape our evolving industry.

SIMPLIFYING THE MOVE TO A CLEANER FLEET

A net-zero emissions transition strategy is a must for any progressive fleet.

40% Over the last quarter, almost 40% of car orders have been for battery electric vehicles.

This is due to several factors, including lower Benefit-in-Kind tax, companies seeking to reduce their carbon emissions on their roadmap towards decarbonisation and fewer miles driven.

We think fleet. That means we're focused on making sure the service you and your drivers receive is second-to-none, from strategic policy support, including grey fleet consideration, to bespoke scheme design and electric vehicle education. It's one of the biggest benefits of working with us.

By partnering with an experienced electric vehicles provider, you can make sure every employee receives the personal support and guidance they need to simplify the transition.

100% We have joined the EV100 initiative and have committed to switch our own company car fleet to 100% electric by 2025. We're leading the way.

GET STARTED

Running a fleet can be complicated and companies now have more options than ever before for providing a vehicle from flexible leasing to salary sacrifice schemes.

Partnering with Zenith is an opportunity to extend your team with highly knowledgeable and personable industry experts. And because we're independent, you can be sure that the advice we give is completely impartial and driven by one thing – the best solution for your business.

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Control at the click of a mouse

Future-proofing fleet software to capture, analyse and communicate data from an ever-growing number of sources presents a real challenge to fleet operators

By Jonathan Manning

Dedicated fleet management software is essential for gaining insight into how a fleet is performing. Such systems not only hold all relevant data, they allow ready access for fleet managers to track and analyse costs, plan service and maintenance work, generate reports, identify rogue vehicles and drivers, forecast budgets and stay compliant.

But, boosting operational efficiency and saving time are only the start. The rapid development of connected technology also allows real-time communication between fleet decision-makers and their vehicles and drivers. Today more than ever, fleet software has to be future-proof.

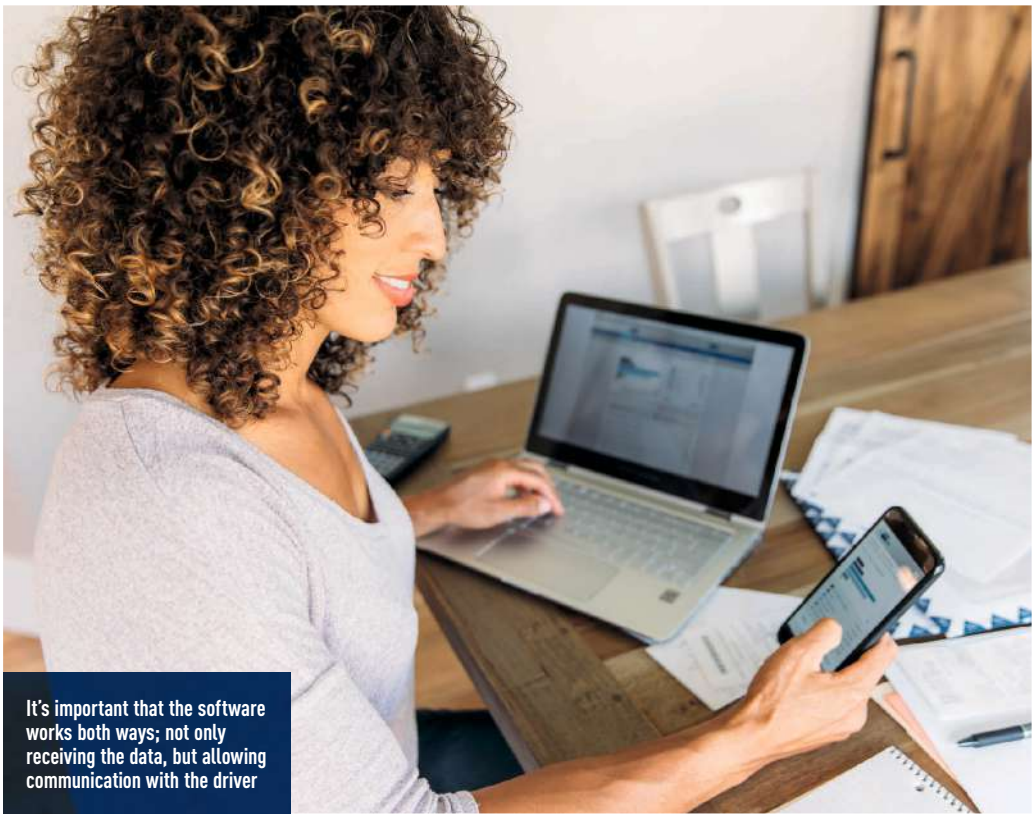
Managing the lifecycle of a fleet vehicle, from order to delivery, maintenance, insurance, fuel expenditure and defleet is only part of the process.

Fleet software must also be able to integrate with other internal IT systems such as payroll, expenses, routing and dispatch.

And, of course, it needs to be easy and intuitive to use. The question is where to begin.

"I would always start with what are your needs and your problem statement," says Duncan Webb, head of fleet UK and Ireland, ISS. "If you can't define what is wrong, then why adapt or change?"

> "IF YOU CAN'T CONTROL THE DRIVER THROUGH THE SOFTWARE, YOU ONLY HAVE HALF THE SYSTEM"
>
> **DUNCAN WEBB, ISS**



It's important that the software works both ways; not only receiving the data, but allowing communication with the driver

ISTOCK.COM/RICHVINTAGE

Identifying the specific issues you want to solve is critical, he adds, although every fleet management software system has certain commonalities.

"The strength of a fleet management software system comes from the fact that its core database is consistent, irrespective of the application needs that you require of it," says Webb.

"If the underlying database is strong and consistent, it can hold data in many forms and that can be shared across the applications you need to apply to it."

As a small example, the same database should make it easy for a fleet manager to bring up reports about which vehicles are are at risk of breaching their leasing contract mileage threshold, and which show unusual fuel consumption patterns or maintenance expenditure.

It should also, ideally, free up a fleet manager's time by automating as many processes as possible, such as issuing notifications for vehicles approaching their VED or MOT deadlines.

"The other big thing I look at is how does it come together for me," says Webb. "It's not just about vehicle data. You have to run safe vehicles and safe people in them, so it's not just a fleet management system, but a fleet and driver management system. That's the holy grail. If you can't control the driver through the software, you only have half the system."

Given the individual requirements of each fleet, Webb recommends that managers seeking a new software system should avoid a negotiated tender based on certain criteria, and, instead, specify the service and write commitments to service through a process of collaboration with the software supplier.

"If you are a fleet expert you are unlikely to be a software expert as well. You want the people who are software experts to tell you what is possible and you turn that into something that is contractually agreed," says Webb.

His advice is echoed by the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS), which advises fleets to start pre-contract.

"Meet up and visit a supplier's premises and develop the agreement together, honestly and with transparency in mind, where both sides share their issues and challenges too," says a CIPS spokesman.

Then, during implementation and operation, "keep channels of communication going and be open and transparent. A clear, concise and realistic document will go a long way to prevent misunderstandings".

This is vital for a fast-changing field such as software, where data sources appear to be increasing exponentially, and it highlights the importance of considering all fleet suppliers when specifying management software. Can they provide the data you require in an open API so it's easy to integrate with all the other functions that fleet touches? And will it be able to operate both ways, not simply receiving data from vehicles and drivers but transmitting it too to reschedule routes and workflows of drivers in the field?

Pick fleet management software to tick all boxes

Running an efficient and legal fleet of vehicles with minimal personnel is a continual challenge for fleet operators. Smart operators are embracing cutting-edge fleet management software to achieve their business objectives. Choosing the right supplier to deliver your business objectives is essential.

Everything in one place

Fleet management software should act as the hub of a wheel with the spokes being the data feeds drawing on information from numerous disparate sources into one central repository.

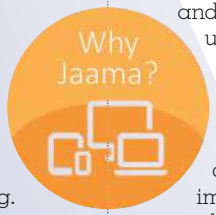
Effectively collecting data from multiple sources enables fleet decision-makers to obtain a holistic view of the entire operation and ensures strategic informed decisions are made with regard to vehicles, drivers and journeys.

Add in the growing use of smartphone apps, that crucially deliver the ability for drivers to provide data back into the fleet system instantaneously and it means the availability and volume of real-time information to fleet decision-makers is unprecedented.

Intelligent data processing

The future is not just about BIG data it is about big understanding. Without the correct centralised management tool in place you could be surrounded by data but starved from insight or, worse, you could be suffering paralysis from analysis but still no further towards your key objective.

Systems such as Key2 from Jaama will not just store data, it will actively manage, monitor and analyse it, with automated tolerance checks and notifications being carried out by the system – exception reporting reduces your cost of control by automatically notifying you of issues that need addressing.



Establish key objectives

What are you looking to achieve from implementing a new software system? What are your pain points and areas for improvement? What are your future aspirations and potential challenges?

Left to right: Michelle Morgan (Operations Director), Martin Evans (Managing Director), James Thresher (IT Director) and Stuart Mills (Development Director)

Establish the business objectives you want to achieve with your chosen fleet management system. Often decision-makers can be sideswiped by the 'bells and whistles' offered by the technology, without full consideration as to whether key objectives are met.

Choose a totally integrated asset management solution that covers all your requirements. A modular system is often more cost-effective as you are not paying for functionality you do not need. However, keep an open-mind as to how additional modules in the system may further improve your fleet operation.

Ensure software is future-proof

The fleet industry is continually evolving and faces unforeseen challenges (let us not mention Covid again). A fleet's chosen software provider must be able to deliver a highly sophisticated, modern, online system, and be fully focused on continuous functionality improvements and providing an excellent customer experience. That remains Jaama's goal.

Ask to see the product road map – all good software providers will have one and be able to show their systems offer genuinely valuable, demonstrable benefits.

Develop a partnership

Acquiring a fleet management system is not generally a quick decision. A good open and honest relationship with an experienced and knowledgeable supplier is the key to success. Investigate the reputation and experience of your chosen fleet management software supplier by analysing its existing customer portfolio.

Do not buy a software system in the hope that it might do the job. All good software suppliers will provide testimonials from relevant customers in similar businesses. Contact existing users of your preferred system; discuss the benefits and visit their offices to see the system operating.

Check the small print

At face value, it may appear you are getting a bargain, but dig deeper. Some systems may incur costly upgrade fees, potentially reducing the lifespan of your system. All Jaama customers continue to benefit from a raft of new features and improvements in functionality every six months as part of its continued multi-million annual system investment. Once you are a Jaama customer you are always using the latest version of the product with no need to budget for costly upgrades during the life of the software.

For further information visit www.jaama.co.uk; email enquiries@jaama.co.uk or call 0844 8484 333

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ISTOCK.COM/GOODBOY PICTURE

How to be smart about SMR

Drilling down into everyday mechanical costs of running a fleet can deliver significant savings

By Jonathan Manning

The sight of fleet cars and vans parked up during coronavirus lockdown has helped focus the attention of many fleet managers on their service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs.

Fleets with fixed, monthly SMR contracts have been paying the same sums despite their vehicles incurring minimal wear and tear, while fleets with pay-as-you go SMR arrangements have been sitting pretty, their minimal mileages often equating to minimal bills.

Fixed-cost plans offer easy financial forecasting and the peace of mind that an unforeseen repair bill won't upset budgets. This 'insured' approach is a logical extension of leasing's risk-free residual values, but it naturally includes a premium for the supplier in return for taking the risk and denies fleet managers the opportunity to exercise control over key areas of in-life vehicle expenditure and may not be as cash-flow efficient.

As a rule of thumb, cars incur 15% of their SMR costs in their first year, 25% in their second year and 60% in their third year; so a fixed-cost arrangement, effectively, overpays for the first two years, while pay-as-you-go saves cash over this period.

However, the principal difference between the two approaches arguably lies in their transparency. Pay-on-use lays bare all the elements that are bundled into a fixed price contract and charging clients the actual cost of work with a per vehicle management fee on top.

Matt Cranny, operations director of ARI, says: "If you are taking budgeted maintenance, it's important to understand all the elements that go into making up that budget – tyres, breakdown and recovery, planned and unplanned service and maintenance events – and decide whether you are happy with each individual element."

> "A FLEET MANAGEMENT COMPANY CAN ADVISE YOU ON ALL THESE DECISIONS SO YOU GET BEST VALUE OUT OF YOUR FLEET"
>
> **MATT CRANNY, ARI**

Is a vehicle covered by a manufacturer's breakdown service for its first year, for example, or do replacement tyres need to be a premium brand, and how much do they actually cost?

"With pay-as-you-go, you have the ability to flex the model to suit your individual fleet needs, the agility to flex it, and the transparency of knowing what to flex," says Cranny.

By monitoring and analysing trends over time, fleets can adopt a preventative maintenance policy, gaining insight into components that fail at a certain time and mileage, and replacing them before they do to minimise downtime.

"So you may decide to run your own service regime that's different to the manufacturer's," adds Cranny.

The same data might also lead fleets to dispose of vehicles before they start to incur heavy maintenance costs.

"A fleet management company can advise you on all these decisions so you get best value out of your fleet," says Cranny.

Analysis by fleet management specialist CLM indicates that across a large basket of vehicles, a pay-as-you-go approach to SMR typically works out about 18% cheaper than fixed price maintenance. Key to this is the use of independent garages rather than franchise showrooms, and rigorous pre-authorisation of all work by trained technicians, says CLM commercial director Andy Short.

"The three key areas we push back on are: incorrect labour times, incorrect parts prices and should it be warranty work? We save clients a huge amount of money by having that governance in place," he says.

Moreover, with a single fleet management company overseeing SMR work, fleets can ensure that all of their drivers receive consistent levels of service, in terms of ease of booking, speed of authorisation, and collection and delivery, which may not be the case if a company uses multiple leasing suppliers.

"For example, what happens if two drivers have their cars booked in to get a tyre replaced at 1.9mm tread depth and one leasing company says yes and the other says no?" asks Short. "Clients, whether they are on fixed or pay-as-you-go SMR, want that driver experience to be the same, they want to be able to influence that driver experience."

Investing to meet evolving needs

With the rate of change in automotive technology showing no sign of slowing, it is vital that fleets can call on suppliers who keep pace with new developments. With its fleet service maintenance and repair (SMR) provision a major strategic focus, Kwik Fit invests heavily in training and equipment to do just that.

As its servicing network is the largest in the UK, comprising more than 600 centres, new equipment upgrades are a significant commitment for Kwik Fit.

However, these investments are essential in offering a consistent service across the country, providing certainty and confidence to fleet customers.

A recent example is equipping all centres with Bosch KTS350 diagnostic testers, an investment of almost £1 million, ensuring that gold standard technology is present in every location.

Training for car parc trends

Ben Boot, head of SMR development, spent 23 years at Enterprise before joining Kwik Fit Fleet, so knows what fleets are looking for and the importance of specialist equipment.

However, he says: "Advanced technology is only one part of the equation – equally important are the skills of people using it. Kwik Fit's training has long been industry-leading and it's continually developed to meet the demands of a changing car parc."

Ben Boot, head of SMR development

"Kwik Fit's training has long been industry-leading and it's continually developed to meet the demands of a changing car parc"

Most recently Kwik Fit's strategy has focused on technical training for hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs). As an approved IMI training centre, Kwik Fit enables its SMR technicians to achieve IMI EV Level 2 accreditation, equipping them to complete all core SMR work on alternatively fuelled vehicles.

Kwik Fit currently has more than 500 EV Level 2 accredited technicians and this number grows continually to serve the UK's expanding EV fleet.

Convenience and control

Complementing Kwik Fit's SMR provision is its network of more than 530 MOT centres. The strength of its network was tested towards the end of 2020 by the deferred demand brought about by the MOT extension. Kwik Fit's MOT capacity, the largest in the UK, enabled the company to accommodate this demand while still offering competitive lead times for tests, a position helped by the fact that most of the network offers weekend slots.

All these appointments can be accessed directly by drivers using Kwik Fit Fleet's Web Bookings platform, which shows live availability at their most convenient centres. For additional convenience Kwik Fit offers collection and delivery for Service and Service/MOT bookings at more than 150 locations. These are managed by a dedicated team which also caters for customers' bespoke SMR and MOT requirements.

Scanning the road ahead

With new technology continually being brought to market, Kwik Fit will continue to expand its SMR capability, notably in EV maintenance and network infrastructure.

Crucially, the company has already begun investing in advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) maintenance, with Bosch DAS3000 static calibration equipment installed in selected centres across the UK, with further roll-out planned for later this year.

Boot knows that looking ahead is vital. He says: "As upcoming legislation mandates more ADAS on new vehicles, we're future-proofing our network to meet the evolving needs of fleet customers, while continuing to provide drivers with convenience, safety and peace of mind."

Kwik Fit

www.kwik-fit.com/fleet

Don't lose the t(h)read!

A smart tyre policy can save money, boost safety and minimise downtime

By Jonathan Manning

Black, round and tucked away on the corners of vehicles, tyres are as hidden from the driver's seat as they are from many fleet budgets. Yet this sole connection between vehicle and tarmac plays a significant role in fleet safety, fuel consumption and vehicle uptime.

The performance of tyres is measured across three criteria set by the European Commission, and the Department for Transport has confirmed that these ratings are continuing post-Brexit.

The first criterion is energy efficiency, a reflection of a tyre's rolling resistance, which affects fuel consumption. Tyres are rated from A to G (A to E from May 2021), with A-rated tyres capable of up to 9% better fuel economy that G-rated ones.

The wet grip of tyres is also graded from A to G (A to E from May), and signifies their stopping distance on a wet road. According to the Tyre Industry Federation, the best performing tyres have a 30% shorter braking distance than the worst, which equates to about an 18-metre shorter stopping distance when braking from 50mph. With rear-end collisions accounting for 29% of crashes, tyres with the best grip could protect drivers, vehicles, other road users and fleet insurance premiums.

In addition, as of May, tyres that reach specific winter performance standards will also be able to display an ice and/or snow icon on their labels.

The third criterion is noise, measured in decibels, which can be an important consideration for drivers who spend long hours in their vehicles, and for corporate responsibility towards communities that live close to roads.

For many fleets, tyre decisions are delegated to leasing companies as part of an all-inclusive contract hire arrangement, but for fleets that operate a pay-as-you-go policy there are three key considerations – when to change tyres, which brand to fit and which supplier to fit them.

The legal minimum tread depth for a tyre is 1.6mm, but most fleets will sanction replacement on safety grounds at 2mm or even 3mm, unless a vehicle is very close to defleet.

> "FROM A POLICY AND PRICE PERSPECTIVE, DO NOT BE AFRAID TO NEGOTIATE WITH A TYRE MAKER"
>
> **STEWART LIGHTBODY, AFP**

As for choosing a brand, "track your own tyre spend and don't be afraid to pitch two tyres side-by-side and do your own analysis across your fleet", says Stewart Lightbody, deputy chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP). "There's nothing better than your own data and experience from your drivers. They will soon tell you if tyres don't grip."

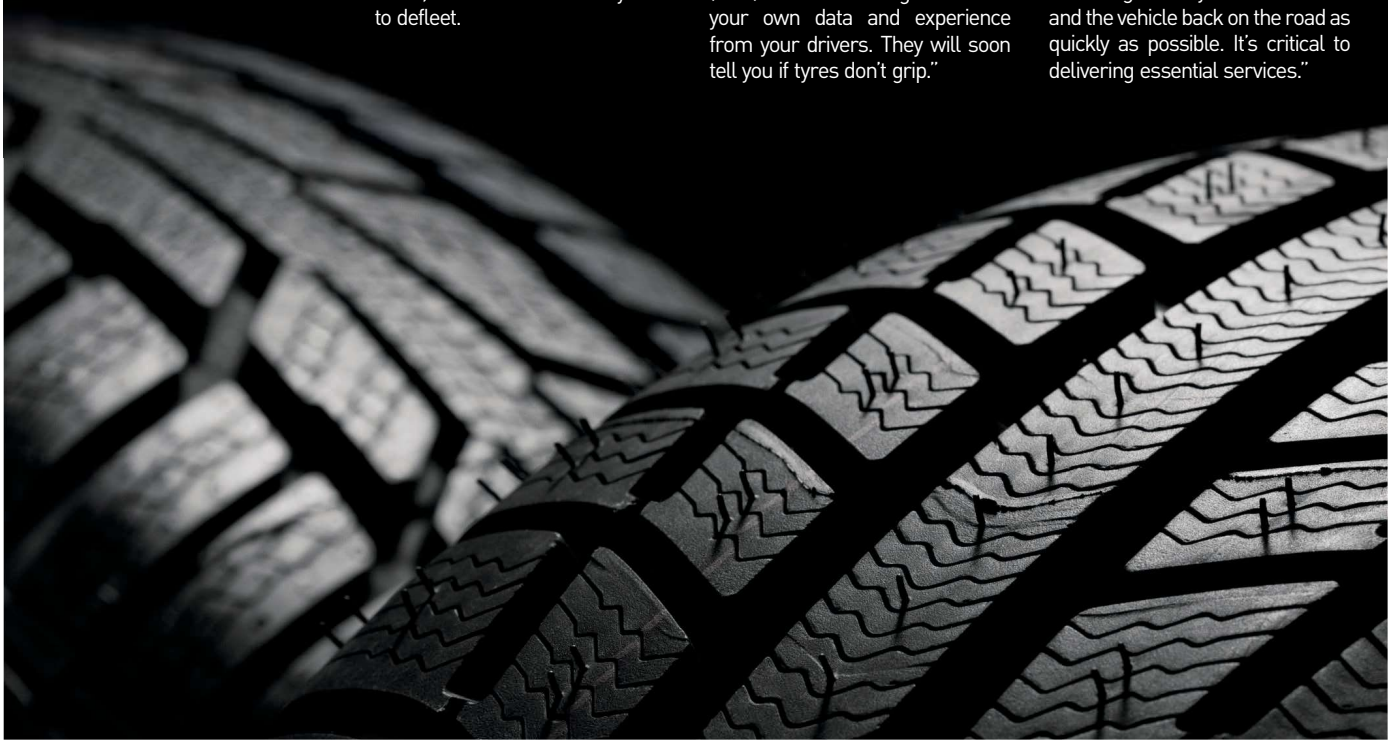
He adds that most company drivers, beyond the occasional petrolhead, have no strong preference for a tyre brand provided they have heard of it, and advises fleets to speak directly with tyre manufacturers for discounts and rebates.

"You will still probably need to deal through one of the tyre fitters, but, from a policy and price perspective, do not be afraid to negotiate with a tyre maker," says Lightbody.

Holly Brooks, senior category lead at Crown Commercial Service, has just set the strategy for a replacement tyre and fast-fit items framework that is being tendered on behalf of public sector fleets, an agreement where service has proved as critical as price and availability, an issue common to many hard-working fleets.

"It's the support and the way the supplier is able to meet the needs of a public sector customer that distinguishes them more than the tyre," she says.

"We have a big blue light requirement, so the service wrap really matters. Speed of delivery, supply chain management, stockholding and rates of response are vital. We need to get the tyre to the vehicle and the vehicle back on the road as quickly as possible. It's critical to delivering essential services."



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Customer service is a matter of policy

Fleet departments spend huge amounts of time choosing the right tyre brands for their vehicles, but all this analysis is wasted if their fitment policy isn't followed at the point of replacement. Ensuring policies are adhered to without delay or inconvenience to the driver requires tyre suppliers to have the right stock, in the right place, at the right time. Offering this winning combination helps make Kwik Fit the market leading provider of tyres to fleet.

Stock levels offer speed and flexibility

Dan Joyce, Kwik Fit fleet director, says: "One of our key objectives is to 'Fit First Visit' and we do this through having more than 650,000 tyres in stock across more than 700 centres. This unparalleled stock level is further enhanced with twice daily deliveries from 11 strategic distribution hubs which hold an additional million tyres."

Benefiting from strong, long-term relationships with the premium tyre manufacturers, Kwik Fit can respond quickly to any issues with availability, or fleet customers changing their fitment policies. With the back-up of flexible supply via its logistics network, Kwik Fit is able to adapt to ever-increasing complexities in vehicle and tyre technology such homologated electric vehicle (EV) tyres and light commercial vehicle applications.

Dan Joyce, Kwik Fit fleet director

"We expect this (at-home fitment) pattern to continue after the pandemic is over. We're developing our mobile offering to meet this"

Centre or mobile fitting – drivers are in control

The advanced technology used for Kwik Fit's logistics is matched by the ongoing developments it introduces for drivers.

Through the Fleet Web Booking platform, drivers are given an unequalled level of control over their booking, leading to strong customer satisfaction levels. The Kwik Fit system holds all the current data regarding their fleet policy and will match these to the details the driver provides. The driver is able to choose from in-centre or on location mobile appointments, based on the live availability of the appropriate tyre and fitting slots.

Another key strength of the company's fleet offering is Kwik Fit Mobile, which has rapidly grown to become a seven-day operation, offering fitment at home or work from 8am-8pm across a wide UK area.

Joyce says: "The demand for at-home fitment has been driven to an all-time high by the impact of Covid-19, but we expect this pattern to continue after the pandemic is over. We're developing our mobile offering to meet this trend and shorten lead times even further."

Customer service – it's personal

A key element in streamlining the process is Kwik Fit's Fleet Authorisation System which incorporates customer-specific tyre fitment policy rules for around one million fleet vehicles. This market-leading tyre management solution enables auto-authorisation, thus improving speed of service delivery in centre.

But for all the technological background systems, the most important asset of Kwik Fit is its people. With unrivalled experience in serving fleet departments and their drivers, the Kwik Fit team's overriding purpose is to keep people safe on the road through providing a premium, professional service.

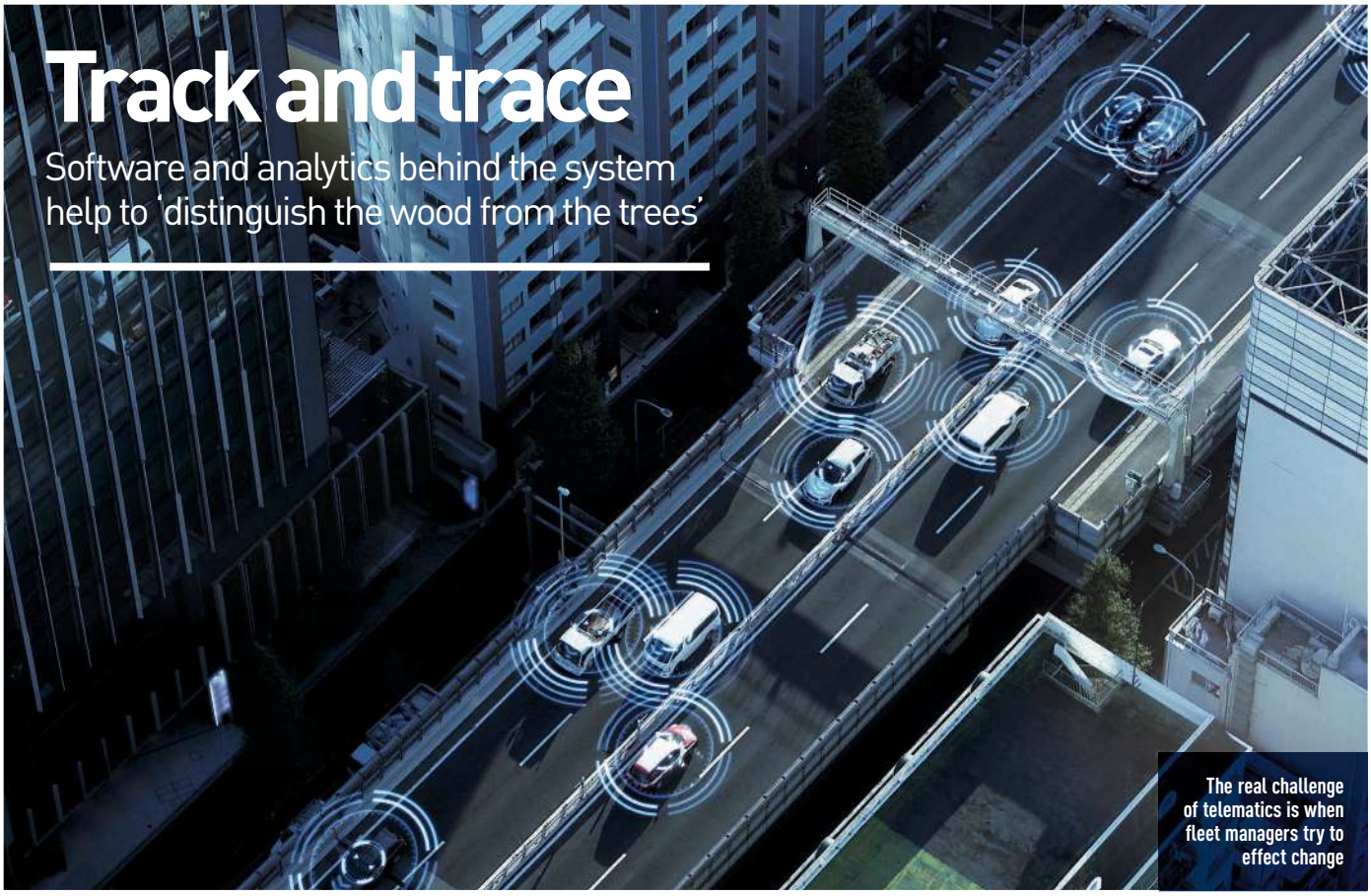
They may have nearly two million tyres on hand, but it's the 5,000 employees with their passion for service delivery who really make the difference.

Kwik Fit

www.kwik-fit.com/fleet

Track and trace

Software and analytics behind the system help to 'distinguish the wood from the trees'



The real challenge of telematics is when fleet managers try to effect change

ISTOCK.COM/METAMORWORKS

By Jonathan Manning

Telematics systems are providing fleet managers with vast amounts of data to mine in the quest for safer, greener, more efficient operations.

When analysed effectively, this endlessly rich source of information provides the foundation for improving driver behaviour, optimising route planning, maximising vehicle uptime, boosting business workflows and preparing the path to electric vehicles (EVs).

> "WE HAVE PUT TELEMATICS IN DIESEL VEHICLES TO SEE IF AN ELECTRIC VERSION WOULD WORK"
>
> **NIGEL MORRIS, SWANSEA UNIVERSITY**

However, without easy and insightful reporting, telematics systems risk drowning fleet managers in a plethora of data, a scenario in which the investment soon becomes a white elephant.

To achieve a return on investment, Stewart Lightbody, deputy chair of the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), advises fleets to focus on one objective, but remain flexible to broadening the scope of ambitions later on.

"All a black box does is produce data, so it's about understanding what you truly want to achieve," he says. "Be very clear on your objectives and break them down into deliverable items; are you looking to combat speeding, tackle harsh acceleration and braking, or just to save fuel?"

"Do you want to link the real-time data to a scheduling tool where you can see the location of all your drivers and where you need to send them? There are lots of opportunities hidden in the data to fix things you want to change."

Key to this are the software and analytics behind the system that help to distinguish the wood from the trees.

"You need clear, concise reporting from your provider on your key metrics. A proactive service provider will help you go through and understand the data, make changes and start to shape the performance of your fleet out on the road; that is the key bit," says Lightbody.

In reality, telematics serves up no more than an accurate, honest picture of how and where vehicles are driven. The real challenges start when fleet managers try to effect change.

How will line managers address drivers who consistently break the speed limit; what training is available for drivers who place themselves and their vehicles at higher risk through harsh acceleration and braking; how will a sales or operations department build on historic route data to change sales territories, re-route drivers around congestion or even ensure that they dispatch the employee with the right skills and the right parts and tools on board, rather than simply sending the closest driver to the client?

With objectives and policies in place, the choice of telematics supplier becomes critical. From a hardware perspective, how difficult is the 'black box' to install, and what does this mean for vehicle downtime, especially on a fleet-wide basis? Secondly, how robust and reliable is the technology? Taking references from other fleet operators who are already using the systems you are considering can provide trustworthy reassurance.

And thirdly, how compatible is the data generated by a black box with a different software system?

If you decide you want to change supplier, or your business buys another that has a legacy telematics system, are the office software and analytics in which you are investing data agnostic? This is going to become a more pressing issue as OEMs introduce connectivity into their new vehicles – will your telematics software 'speak', for example, fluent Ford, Volkswagen and BMW?

Remember, too, that telematics data can be highly sensitive, so it's vital that any supplier satisfies GDPR-style requirements.

Finally, dependent on your objective, there may not be the need to install black boxes in every vehicle, but, instead, move them from one to another.

"We have put telematics in diesel vehicles to see if an electric version would work," said Nigel Morris, business development manager, Specific, Swansea University. "And we have moved telematics boxes from vehicle to vehicle, partly because that's all we can afford and partly because once you have the usage pattern of a vehicle you can find the usage pattern of another."

Not sure where to start when switching to EV?

Here are the top five questions you should ask your telematics provider...

Successful electric vehicle (EV) adoption requires good data and utilising available insights. Geotab is the global leader in EV telematics, supporting fleets from 1% to 100% electric. Use these five questions as a guide to make your electrification journey easier:

Question 1: Can my telematics provider recommend a plan for fleet electrification, customised to my fleet?
It is important to develop a custom fleet electrification plan that answers the following questions:

- Which EVs have enough range?
- How much will I save over time?
- What is my new carbon footprint?
- What charging infrastructure is needed?

Geotab's Electric Vehicle Suitability Assessment tool combines your existing fleet's data with the world's largest EV performance dataset to recommend makes and models that are range capable and cost comparable to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, and support sustainability targets.

Question 2: Does my telematics system provide the basic EV driving and charging data I need?
Effective telematics systems will clearly show the charging status of every vehicle. With this information, you can prioritise plugging in low-charge vehicles and improve response times by dispatching the closest charged vehicle to a customer location.

The MyGeotab Map includes real-time battery state of charge to help identify which EVs in the fleet have the highest and lowest battery charge. You can also view which EVs are actively charging at any given time. Along with the EV Charging Report, you can see the complete charging history of any vehicle, including where and when it was charged, how long it was charging and the amount of charge it received.

> "With Geotab's rules engine and advanced reporting you can create, run and deliver the information you want, the way you want, whenever you want, to who you want"

Question 3: Does my telematics system expand my charging infrastructure and make it smarter?
With telematics technology you can develop automated home charging reimbursement reports by combining geofence zones, charging events and costs. The EV Charge Assurance Add-In on the Geotab Marketplace makes monitoring EV charging simple by providing a comprehensive view of the charging status of all vehicles, making sure vehicles are ready for their next trip.

Geotab is partnering with charging stations and managed charging platform vendors to help improve the reliability and accuracy of their smart charging prioritisation.

Question 4: Can my telematics system be customised for my fleet's specific EV needs?
With Geotab's rules engine and advanced reporting you can create, run and deliver the information you want, the way you want, whenever you want, to who you want. Start with our ready-to-go Fuel and EV Energy Usage and EV Charging standard reports and tailor them to your exact fleet needs.

Question 5: Does my telematics system support all the EVs I'm interested in today? And tomorrow?
Unlike conventional ICE vehicles, EVs do not follow mandatory telematics data standards. Working directly with manufacturers, we have developed unique capabilities to access critical EV data, ensuring your EVs will have strong data support today and as you grow your EV fleet – utilise the world's largest EV dataset from Geotab.

For more information on EV fleet management, visit www.geotab.com/uk or contact infouki@geotab.com

GEOTAB
management by measurement

Be sure to weigh up all charge point options before you go digging deep

Upgrades to the grid are eye-wateringly expensive, so try to operate within local capacity

By Jonathan Manning

The workplace car park is set for rapid and radical transformation as companies seek to electrify their fleets. The requirement to top up or completely recharge electric vehicle batteries during the working day and overnight means organisations will need to install multiple charge points.

This represents virgin territory for most fleets and raises important questions about the number of chargers required, the optimum speed of them and their ideal location. It also demands new corporate policies about who can plug their vehicles into company chargers, when they can use charge points and how they pay for power.

Fraser Crichton, corporate fleet operations manager at Dundee City Council is responsible for a network of 458 chargers and rising, some exclusively for council use and others open to the public, with the city debuting its zero emission transition a decade ago.

His start point for new locations is to identify the available energy where vehicles are parked, both car parks and depots.

The distribution network operator (DNO), owner and operator of the power lines and infrastructure that connect properties to the national grid, can supply this information, which is critical for determining both the number and speed of chargers a destination can support

Upgrades to the grid are eye-wateringly expensive, so it makes financial sense to operate within the local capacity wherever possible.

It is easier and cheaper to install a greater number of slower chargers, typically 7kW, capable of recharging a car in six-to-eight hours, than fewer, high-speed 50kW chargers, says Crichton.

"As a rule of thumb, when you have more than eight EVs at a site I would normally look to have a rapid 50kW charger," he says. "The number of times people say they have put a vehicle on charge and return to find it wasn't on charge and that the battery is flat is an issue, particularly if you have car pools with different people driving the same car. The rapid charger is your back-up to boost the batteries to 50% charge in 15 minutes."

When determining the number of chargers required, Crichton advises a detailed analysis of vehicle mileages. With the new generation of EVs boasting significant ranges on a single battery charge, there's unlikely to be a requirement for a ratio of one charger per vehicle. An EV with a 200-mile range and a daily route of 40 miles would, in theory, only need recharging once per week, so one charger could potentially serve five vehicles.

With the number of chargers decided, there's still the question of where to site them, explains Nigel Morris, business development manager, Specific, Swansea University and triple winner at the 2020 Fleet News Awards, including Best Environmental Fleet.

"The most annoying and biggest cost of putting in chargers is the grounds cost. You have to start doing surveys and, if you are in leased premises, you have to talk to the landowner about digging a trench," he said. "Look at where your electricity capacity is in relationship to your switchboard; can you avoid digging and instead use a suitable wall-to-surface mount for your chargers, which is a lot cheaper?"

If there's no alternative to digging, adds Morris, think about the future and make sure you bury sufficient ducting to accommodate cables for more chargers. Bear in mind, too, the ergonomics of charging bays – avoid cables acting as trip hazards while drivers load their vehicles, and bays too narrow for disabled people to negotiate while plugging in.

It's also worth planning in detail how to fund a workplace recharging infrastructure, with purchase and lease options both possible, as well as deciding whether to maintain them in-house or via an outsourced maintenance contract.

The selection of chargers and service support matters both for unit reliability and for the confidence and security that the supplier will still be able to source spares and offer support 10 years from now.

Beyond the £20,000-plus cost of a 50kW rapid charger, green champions might also want to budget for creating a 'fanfare' around EV charging bays, painting the tarmac and adding information signs to reassure drivers about charge point infrastructure and to use for wider social media opportunities to promote corporate social responsibility commitments.

Finally, before anyone plugs in their EV at work it's important to establish a recharging policy that establishes both user etiquette and payment.

"Employees must understand this isn't a parking bay, but a charging space. It's really frustrating to see an EV parked but not charging, or a PHEV that only needs to be plugged in for an hour occupying a charging bay all day," says Morris.

Allocating the costs of charging also needs careful consideration: too cheap and drivers lose the incentive to charge EVs overnight at home; too expensive and it can undermine the fledgling zero emission policy.

CHARGING SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Future-proofing investment in workplace electric vehicle (EV) recharging infrastructure requires bold decisions, given the new technology emerging and the rapidly growing demand for power.

The capacity of the grid is limited, so fleets will require charging solutions that stagger the time when vehicles are actually drawing power, even if they are all plugged in simultaneously. Recharging batteries at off-peak, low tariff times can save two-thirds of EV 'fuel' costs, with further revenue-raising opportunities in the pipeline from vehicle-to-grid technology that sees EVs store excess power and resupply either their local buildings or the national grid at peak times.

Be aware, however, that for this to become a commercial reality fleets may have to commit to having their vehicles plugged in at certain times, which may not be operationally possible.

Finally, with net zero carbon emissions providing the EV impetus, companies may want to synchronise the installation of charge points with investment in solar roof panels, harvesting their own clean energy to power their own clean vehicles.

"If you are going to have to pay for a grid connection upgrade you might want to do a cost-benefit analysis of investing in some on-site renewables plus battery storage," says Nigel Morris, business development manager, Specific, Swansea University.

"The cost of your upfront investment in panels and a battery might be less than upgrading the substation."

One charger could potentially serve five vehicles

ISTOCK.COM/JEREMYSWILD

bp pulse will encourage EV adoption at every step

With the switch to electric vehicles (EVs) on the radar for many fleets, bp pulse provides a complete charging solution for your business.

However you run your fleet, as one of the largest and most experienced charging companies in the UK, we're here to keep it on the road.

bp pulse has been helping drivers charge their EVs for more than a decade and, as a key part of bp's Net Zero 2050 initiative, we can tailor our services to meet your exact requirements, with an ecosystem of different products to help manage your needs.

Recent research published in bp's *Future of Fleet Report* revealed that 25% of fleet decision-makers are concerned that EV models do not cover enough miles in one charge, while 24% said they do not have the time to charge while on the road.

"bp pulse is committed to supporting the evolving needs of its customers and their businesses, helping them reduce emissions"

One complete solution

We understand that fleet decision-makers within a business are under constant pressure to keep evolving, ensuring they are meeting the greenest and most efficient options for their company vehicles to keep in line with legislation. At bp, we provide an unmatched customer service for your business to provide the support you need, ensuring your commercial objectives are being met.

Our expert team will guide you through our comprehensive range of home, on-the-go and workplace chargers so you can have the confidence to transition to a pure electric fleet.

Charging up your business

Not only does bp pulse have the largest rapid and ultra-fast charging network in the UK, but it can support you through the process of electrifying your depot, facility, office or home with its complete range of workplace charging products.

Today, you'll find more than 8,000 public charging points available across the UK, and bp's ambition is to increase this to 16,000 by 2030.

bp's Fuel and Charge app also makes it easy to find charging points on the go; by entering your vehicle model, it directs you to a nearby and compatible charging station.

The development of EV charging technologies and networks is a key part of bp's strategy on its journey to net zero by 2050. bp pulse is committed to supporting the evolving needs of its customers and their businesses, helping them reduce their emissions and make the switch to EV.

If you would like more information or to arrange a meeting with one of its charging specialists, please contact the team at https://www.bppulse.co.uk/charging-for-business and they will work with you to determine the best solution.

www.bppulse.co.uk/charging-for-business

Outsourcing: one supplier or many?

The huge scope of duties and decisions required to run a fleet efficiently means outsourcing elements of its management makes sense

ISTOCK.COM/DESIGNER491

By Jonathan Manning

Fleet management covers such a wide spectrum of responsibilities that decisions to bring in fleet management support requires attention through the planning and implementation stages as well as during the contract itself.

A far from exhaustive list of fleet management duties would include:

- Vehicle selection, sourcing, acquisition and funding.
- Service, maintenance and repair (SMR).
- Fuel purchasing and management.
- Vehicle breakdown and recovery.
- Temporary replacement vehicles.
- Driver contact and advice.
- Fleet safety, licence checking and driver training.
- Insurance and accident management.
- The return or disposal of vehicles at the end of their fleet lives.

Add into the mix other time-consuming tasks, such as advising drivers on their next company car or sorting out permissions for drivers to take their vehicles overseas, and it's easy to see how mundane, day-to-day jobs could occupy all the waking hours of a fleet manager without leaving capacity to take a more strategic approach to the role.

Moreover, in businesses where fleet management is not a full-time role, there's a danger that decisions which have operational consequences are delayed, or that fleet duties compromise an employee's ability to perform the other elements of their job.

It's also important to acknowledge whether the technical skills to oversee fleet operations, particularly among organisations operating specialist vehicles or vehicle uptime are mission-critical, actually exist in-house, without even considering issues of compliance.

The questions, therefore, are which fleet duties to outsource and which to retain in-house, and how to monitor outsourced services to ensure they deliver the service and value expected.

The steady growth of contract hire and leasing over the past 25 years offers a prime example of how organisations have outsourced vehicle sourcing, funding, service, maintenance and disposal, while maintaining control over fleet policy in terms of the type, fuel and age of vehicles available to their drivers.

In this scenario, fleet management boils down to supplier selection and management. Are the appropriate reporting mechanisms in place to monitor key performance indicators and ensure service level agreements are delivered? Striking the right contract from the outset is paramount.

Determining the scope of the contract is also vital; is it better to bundle all outsourced services with one supplier (which, in turn, may outsource some of them), or to appoint different suppliers for each fleet service? As a rule of thumb, the smaller a fleet the more sense it makes to bundle services to make life easier for whoever is responsible for a fleet in-house, says Chris Joyce, Association of Fleet Professionals board member.

"I prefer to bundle services, because then you are not paying individual suppliers an overhead. So, generally speaking, you get a more cost effective approach," he says. "But you might not get the 'best of breed' in each of the elements of service."

Even in a bundled arrangement, it's critical that each area of supply has measurable performance criteria, he adds.

"If you outsource fuel card management, for example, you need to set targets for turnaround times for card distribution, ensure key data is provided and analysed; you wouldn't want to get involved in data anomalies such as mile per gallon figures that are too low or exceeding tank sizes. You would expect your supplier to do that in a timely fashion," says Joyce.

"Then with SMR you would expect a service booking line, online tools, plus turnaround times for enquiries so drivers can book within a reasonable timeframe.

"Above all, the more you outsource the more you want to be having a really good online system that does the reporting so you don't lose the overview of what's happening with your drivers and vehicles."

Empower drivers to make right decisions while on the road

More often now, fleet managers are supporting their drivers with the tools to make good decisions that help them stay safe on the road. This means sharing 'big picture' insights about behavioural trends to watch out for, but also deploying in-the-moment vehicle alerts that allow drivers to self-correct immediately.

By placing driver safety and empowerment at the heart of their programmes, fleet managers are focusing on their most important assets.

Power of in-the-moment alerts

A driver who self-corrects risky behaviours is in the best possible position to help keep the fleet on track. Unlike traditional telematics which only tells you the what, powerful technologies such as machine vision and artificial intelligence (MV+AI) integrated with video, are used to tell the why and provide drivers with a little extra assistance.

MV, essentially, acts as a smart set of eyes that scans and recognises both the internal and external environment of the vehicle, including the ability to identify distracted driving behaviours such as mobile phone use, eating, drinking, smoking or failure to wear a seatbelt. AI determines how risky that issue is and whether it needs to be flagged to the driver or manager.

> "Our database is meaningful because it consists of more than 120 billion miles of driving data from more than one million commercial drivers"

Put technology in hands of the driver

As well as reacting in the moment, it's important that drivers have the opportunity to review their overall driving style. This includes spotting any risky behaviours that may be sneaking in over time.

One of the ways this can be achieved is by giving drivers condensed video clips to review at their leisure after their shift. The sight of themselves on video exhibiting potentially risky behaviours is a direct and effective way to help a driver become more aware of their actions, placing the risk more firmly in their consciousness as a result.

The bigger picture

As a manager, understanding the bigger impact of these behaviours is also important. You need to be able to predict and manage future collision risk exposure to your fleet by analysing past data.

The more quality data you have, the easier it becomes to see trends on a bigger scale – and feel confident they are accurate. At Lytx, our database is meaningful because it consists of more than 120 billion miles of driving data from more than one million commercial drivers worldwide. This grows by more than 140,000 new driving events each day, further improving its algorithms.

For safer fleets, we need these insights to be shared properly. It is essential we place drivers themselves at the heart of the process. By placing some of this power into the hands of the drivers we can increase co-operation, share the responsibility and have an approach to fleet management that is altogether more agile and responsive. Only then we really achieve lasting behaviour change that sticks.

Contact lytx.com for more information or to schedule a demo.

lytx®

www.lytx.com

House of cards

Implementing controls on fuel spend and analysing data from fuel expenditure are vital for minimising fleet costs

By Jonathan Manning

As the biggest day-to-day fleet cost, fuel expenditure demands careful control and management. While cash, credit cards and expense receipts are a recipe for inflated costs; dedicated fuel purchasing cards help to combat unauthorised driver purchases, channel purchasing power, provide consolidated VAT invoices and deliver the management information to support fuel economy initiatives.

The transition to plug-in vehicles, however, introduces a new variable as fleet departments seek to manage and control recharging costs while satisfying the range requirements of electric vehicle drivers who need access to as wide a network of charge points as possible, even if these are operated by different networks.

Whatever the energy source, there are commonalities to look out for when selecting a new fuel card supplier, according to Duncan Webb, head of fleet UK and Ireland, ISS.

"The two core elements are availability and price – where can you fill up and how much will it cost?" he says. "There is no point in doing a fantastic deal with a fuel company that only has 200 filling stations in the UK and can't meet the needs of your drivers."

The loss of productivity in drivers having to divert from their planned route to find a filling station that accepts their fuel card could outweigh any pump price savings, especially for mission-critical, time-pressed organisations such as blue light fleets and multi-drop couriers.

The choice typically boils down to a multi-brand card which gives access to all the major oil company and supermarket filling stations, or a dedicated and more limited oil company card.

While many oil companies may not advertise the fact, they will often accept the card of a rival firm, extending the size of their filling station network, but not necessarily extending the same buying terms.

These terms vary according to the type of arrangement that fleets negotiate, which for car and van fleets usually boils down to one of two options – the pump price (with the possibility of a discount) or a fixed price.

Fixed prices are usually restricted to diesel and offer a set price for a certain period (normally a week), regardless of the prices advertised at the filling station. This price can be based on a discount applied to a national average price; or a Platts-plus price, Platts being an index of diesel pricing, to which a fixed margin is applied to cover the cost of fuel distribution and profit.

Alternatively, fleets can negotiate a discount of a few pence per litre from the prevailing pump price at the forecourt where a driver refuels, an attractive option albeit one where a supermarket may still prove cheaper than a discounted oil company forecourt.

In terms of minimising fleet fuel spend, however, Webb advises fleets to concentrate on controls rather than price.

"You can save more money through good data than a price negotiation," he says. "I would always look for a fuel card's control environment – can I put on a card some highly configurable features to stop fraud. Can I stop shop and oil purchases, and vehicle wash? Can I restrict a card to diesel or unleaded?

"The configurability of a card to create a control environment that is specific to you is important, rather than give everyone a card that can do everything, which is when you open up risk."

Beyond these controls, there is also the configurability of reports, analyses and notifications from rich fuel card data to consider.

Which vehicles are proving most fuel efficient? Which drivers return the lowest fuel consumption figures; and can their behaviour be changed to drive more sensitively and safely?

And what is a fleet's true carbon footprint; which leads neatly on to solutions for access to public electric vehicle charging networks.

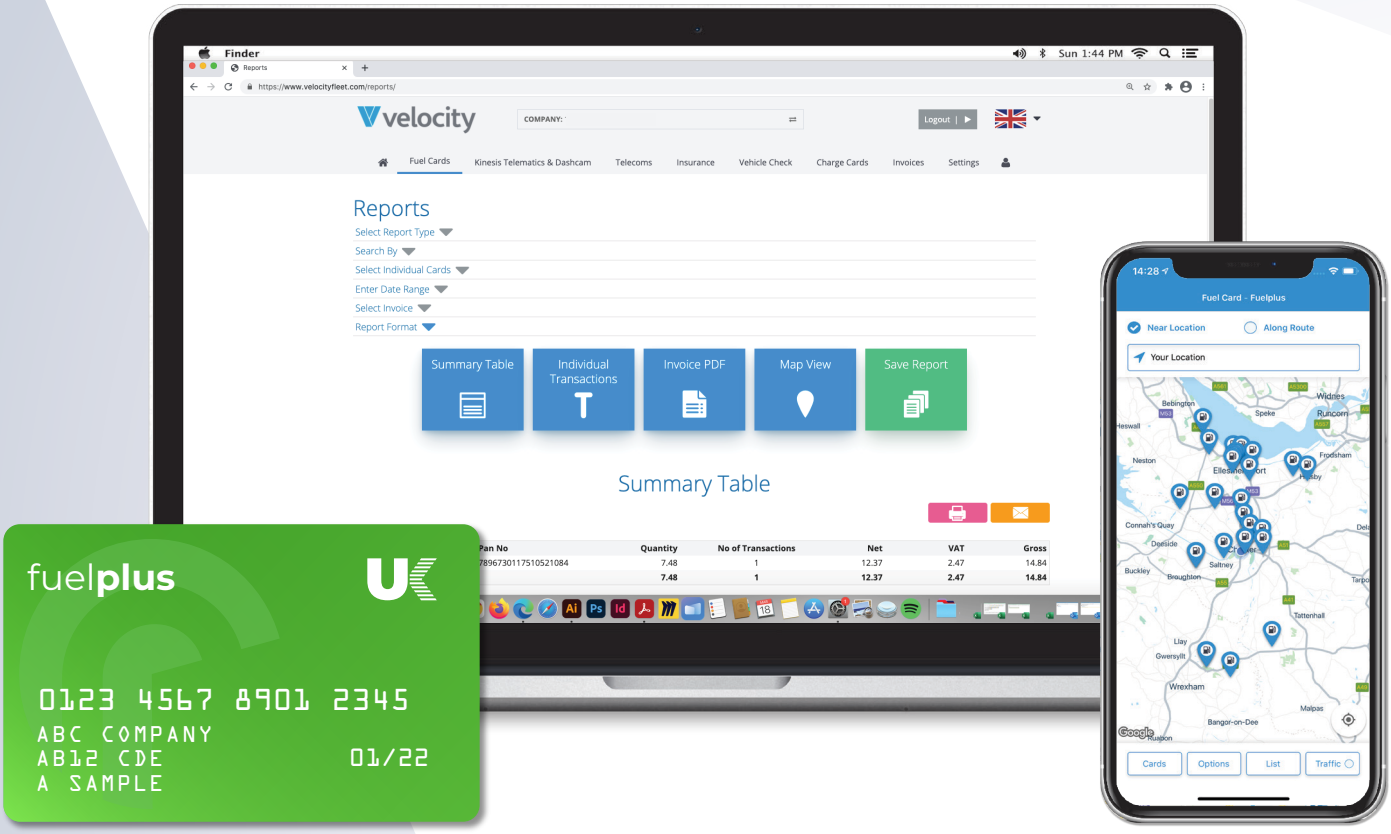
Can the same fuel card manage the transition from petrol and diesel to battery power, and deliver the same consolidated invoice and management information, or is it time to find a new supplier?

> "YOU CAN SAVE MORE MONEY THROUGH GOOD DATA THAN A PRICE NEGOTIATION"
>
> **DUNCAN WEBB, ISS**

How configurable is it? It's an important consideration when picking a card

ISTOCK.COM/KWUN KAU TAM

Are you getting the best deal on fuel for your business?



Do you know how much it costs you to use your business vehicles each year? How much does your company spend running its fleet of cars, vans or HGVs?

The average family spends £3,172 on fuel every year, according to the Department for Transport. Meanwhile, the cost of running the average fleet vehicle will be on average much more than this each year, as fleet vehicles spend far more time on the roads.

If your fleet fuel costs are building up, then UK Fuels can help you manage your spend better.

Smarter fuel for your business

UK Fuels has been a leader in the fuel card market for more than 30 years. With our experience and know-how, we can help you find the right fuel cards and pricing tariff to ensure you get the most competitive price for your fuel.

From small businesses just starting out to fleet businesses and major logistics and haulage companies, UK Fuels can find a fuel card that meets every individual business's needs.

All of this combines to give fleet managers the confidence to make smarter decisions about fuelling their fleets.

Helping you choose the best card for you

UK Fuels has one of the largest independent multi-branded fuel station networks in the UK. Our network covers 96% of the UK, by postcode area, which means fleet users can buy fuel at more than 3,300 fuel stations nationwide, giving them convenience and choice when filling up. Our cards are also widely accepted at 80% of the UK's supermarkets, including Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons and the Co-op.

Working with all the major oil companies, we also give you access to an additional 3,500 stations, including Shell, Esso, Texaco or BP, providing even more fuel card options to choose from.

Saving time and money

With our software, we make it easy to manage your fuel use.

Our Velocity dashboard lets you control your fuel costs and driver performance, helping you save time and money. It also saves you time on your expenses with HMRC-compliant invoicing and gives you the option to set up fuel alerts to help you manage your fuel card spend.

Find a fuel station when you need it

UK Fuels has also recently launched a new station finder, e-route. The e-route app is available to all UK Fuels customers for free, making it easy to find fuel stations for individual fuel cards or station networks.

It also helps fleet drivers plan fuel stops into their journeys, helping save time and money on wasted mileage driving to find a fuel station.

If you would like to know more about UK Fuels and our range of cards and tariffs, call 0344 880 2468 and speak to one of our sales team or visit ukfuels.co.uk for more information and to apply online.

UK fuels

CITROËN C4 AND E-C4

C4 achieves a good mix of the quirky and the conventional though interior is a tad drab

By Matt de Prez

Citroën is no stranger to quirky design and the new C4 certainly lives up to the French brand's desire to be different. It sits in between the traditional hatchback and crossover segments, reflecting the current trend for rugged looks. As a result, the new C4 not only replaces the old version but also the Cactus.

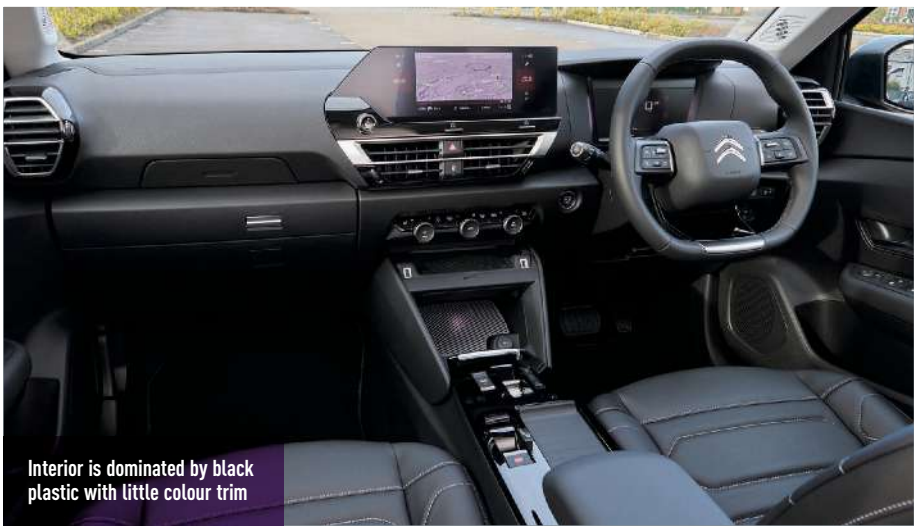
The C4's styling is unconventional, with oversized headlights, numerous blobs and grilles, plus a split rear windscreen. Yet, on the inside, things are a bit more conventional. We loved the C3 and C5 Aircross for their neatly detailed cabins, but the C4 loses some of this flair.

The interior is dominated by black plastic. Aside from some coloured trim pieces on the door cards and a bit of shiny trim around the air vents, it's a tad drab when compared with the exterior.

Thankfully, the usability of the C4's interior is much better. There's conventional heating controls, rather than a sub-menu within the infotainment system, and the materials used on touchpoints like the steering wheel, gear selector and other switchgear feel upmarket.

Alongside petrol and diesel options, the fully electric e-C4 is also available. It makes use of the same motor and battery setup as you'll find across the PSA electric line-up (including the Vauxhall Mokka-e as reviewed on page 64), offering 136PS and a range of 217 miles.

The petrol-powered PureTech 130 is expected to be the most popular model for now though, so we'll look at that one first. It uses a 1.2-litre turbo-charged three-cylinder unit paired with a six-speed manual or eight-speed auto. The engine feels lively, delivering punchy acceleration accompanied by a satisfying engine note.



Interior is dominated by black plastic with little colour trim

During our test we were able to achieve in excess of 40mpg over a mixed route and expect getting close to the claimed 54mpg would be achievable on a steady journey.

A lower-powered version of the same engine, serving up 100PS, will be available from May and will form the entry-level of the range.

For drivers doing the highest mileages, BlueHDI versions with 110PS and 130PS are also available, achieving more than 60mpg. These are expected to account for less than 20% of ICE sales, however.

Citroën's key differentiator is its commitment to comfort and, in the C4 the Advanced Comfort Programme – first introduced alongside the original C4 Cactus – it finally makes sense.

Until now, other Citroëns have been hampered by the comfort focus, making them a bit too soft and wallowy. But the C4 has been dialled in just right. It rides beautifully, ironing out all the imperfections on the roads and giving levels of comfort you'd expect from a car that cost three times as much.

When cornering, the car does pitch about a little initially; but grip levels are strong and the C4 encourages you to drive it quickly. The experience remains relaxed, however. It feels like an old-school saloon rather than a modern hatch/crossover.

Sound deadening is another strong point. There's very little road noise and the sleek body helps to keep wind noise to a minimum. Long journeys in the C4 are a delight.

Things are even better in the e-C4. The weight of the battery in the chassis enhances the already enjoyable driving characteristics and the

	PETROL (FLEET PICK) PureTech 130 Sense Plus	DIESEL BlueHDI 130 Sense Plus	ELECTRIC e-C4 Shine Plus
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£22,775	£25,825	£33,340
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	122g	120g	0
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	28%/£106	28%/£120	1%/£6
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	54.9	64.9	217
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.8	8.6	3.6
Annual VED	£175 then £150	£175 then £150	£0
Class 1A NIC	£880	£998	£46
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£6,135/27%	£6,508/25%	£9,403/28%
AFR (ppm)	10	8	4
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	34.5ppm	36.8ppm	36.9ppm

Go to www.fleetnews.co.uk for tax figures from April 2021-2025

RIVALS

	MAZDA CX-30 e-Skyactiv G SE-L	FORD FOCUS 1.0T 125 Active	KIA XCEED 1.0T-GDi Edition
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£22,670	£24,030	£20,935
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	134	118	136
Monthly BIK tax (40%)	30%/£113	27%/£108	31%/£108
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	47.9	54.3	47.1
Fuel cost (ppm)	11.2	9.9	11.4
Annual VED	£215 then £150	£175 then £150	£215 then £150
Class 1A NIC	£938	£895	£895
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£8,075/35%	£5,993/25%	£5,073/24%
AFR (ppm)	17	10	10
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	33.1ppm	36.2ppm	34.8ppm

suspension settings are a tad firmer, making it the most engaging to drive.

Don't expect lightening acceleration, though. The e-C4 performs very similarly to the petrol model, albeit with a slightly more immediate throttle response. Its 0-60mph time of nine seconds is 0.1s behind that of the petrol version.

The range of 217 miles, or an indicated 206 miles in our fully-charged test car, requires a fairly timid driving style. During our time in the e-C4 we averaged 3.3m/kWh, which would suggest a real-world range of roughly 150 miles.

An 80% charge can take as little as 30 minutes when using a 100kW rapid charger, but a regular 7kW home charger will take around seven-and-a-half hours to replenish the battery.

In terms of rivals, the C4 sits alongside the regular crop of hatches, like the VW Golf, but also competes with the likes of Toyota's C-HR and the Nissan Juke.

From a driveability perspective it offers advantages in comfort and is by far the best-driving Citroën we've experienced for a long time. Pricing from £21,000 makes it accessible to many too, although the e-C4 is almost £10,000 more. We think it's a good all-rounder, but whether drivers see the appeal in its bold looks and conservative interior remains to be seen.

The C4 range has four trims: Sense, Sense Plus, Shine and Shine Plus. They all feature a 10-inch touchscreen infotainment system, which uses familiar PSA software. There's also a 5.5-inch digital instrument cluster, which is less impressive than some other brands offer.

All models get LED headlights, parking sensors and lane-keeping assist. The e-C4 is not available in the base trim, but Sense Plus comes with sat-nav, a reversing camera and power-flooding door mirrors.

Shine adds keyless entry, tinted windows and adaptive cruise control. It also has an enhanced active safety brake system that can detect cyclists. Shine Plus adds heated front seats, leather upholstery and an upgraded stereo system.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward

Volvo held an online press conference a few weeks ago to announce that, by 2025, half of its cars will be electric, and by 2030, 100% will be fully electric. Big ambitions.

It also said all EVs will only be available to buy online. There were no indications exactly what would happen to its dealers, but it did say that you would have to order a car online either at home, your office, or at the dealership.

Presumably that means you pop down to your local Volvo dealer, sit in a corner with a computer and order your new car. For the fleet industry ordering new cars either direct, or with dealers has for some time been done away from showrooms, so not much difference for leasing companies.

But if what Volvo is doing becomes the new norm, what will happen to the traditional new car dealer? Will those glass palaces become redundant, along with the salespeople? Will they simply become service and parts garages, or will the motor industry rise up to the challenges and reinvent itself?

It has been proven beyond any doubt in the past few months that you can buy virtually anything online with hardly any need for shops and showrooms.

So the future of the new car showroom must be now in doubt. Road test reports in magazines and digitally may become more valuable and more read by potential buyers, if test drives become unavailable. I'm not sure I'd be spending millions on new dealer premises, or updating them.

Underneath the arches

It always staggers me just how many people make a living out of the motor industry and I'm not talking about new cars, fleet or new and used vehicle sales.

No, I'm talking about the thousands who have back street garages, under the arches, or in industrial unit. Those who don't repair vehicles, but do all sorts of work on them, from customising, supplying various non-genuine parts, adapting vehicles, painting, reupholstering, converting, electrical work and virtually doing and getting anything you want.

They are everywhere and are generally very good at what they do. These keep older cars on the road, make a very ordinary and standard car into something special and often unique. Also, thanks to them, values stay higher than they normally would be and, as we know, if an old car keeps its value, then they prop up newer ones. The higher the value, the lower the monthly payments, and more new cars are sold. These under-the-arch merchants actually help new car sales. We should not treat them like a poor relation.

VAUXHALL MOKKA

Motoring media is unlikely to mock this Mokka

By Andrew Ryan

Vauxhall's Mokka range has been a huge sales success since the original was launched in 2012, with more than 200,000 sold in the UK and more than one million across Europe.

This was at odds with the reception it received from the motoring media. It was generally unloved, with critics giving it lukewarm reviews.

The new version should rectify that. It's a huge improvement over its predecessor, offering stylish looks, a quality interior and a decent driving experience.

It will need these attributes to make an impact in the increasingly crowded B-SUV sector, which currently accounts for 14% of all new car registration and is one of the fastest-growing segments in the UK.

One of the rivals it faces is Vauxhall's own Crossland, although the manufacturer says Mokka will appeal to a different type of customer.

It's easy to understand this. Compared with the Crossland, the Mokka is much more eye-catching and funky, being the first Vauxhall to use the brand's new design language.

This is most evident at the front, where a new grille and headline treatment – dubbed Vauxhall Vizor – makes its debut.

The interior is also a huge step up from its predecessor, with a conventional instrument panel replaced by a digital cluster, and an infotainment touchscreen contained in one, sweeping unit.

It looks great and is intuitive to use, further adding to the modern feeling of the new Mokka. Android Auto and Apple CarPlay are standard on all models.

Piano black trim is plentiful, while the quality of materials and build are good, making it feel much more upmarket than its predecessor.

Cabin space is ample for two adults in the front, but restricted knee and legroom in the back means it is better suited to youngsters for long journeys.

Mokka is based on PSA Stellantis's new CMP platform, which also underpins other models such as the Peugeot 208 and the new Citroën C4, with engine choice limited to a 1.2-litre petrol with either 100PS or 130PS and a 1.5-litre diesel with 110PS.

Efficiency figures for the 100PS petrol are official combined fuel economy of 51.4mpg and CO_2 from 124g/km. The 130PS petrol offers up to 51.4mpg and CO_2 from 123g/km. The diesel is the most efficient internal combustion engine (ICE) model at 65.7mpg and 114g/km.

The halo model in the range, however, is the fully-electric Mokka-e which offers a range up to 201 miles from its 50kWh battery.

It supports 100kW rapid DC charging, meaning it can by charged from 0-80% capacity in 30 minutes to give a driving range of up to 160 miles. From a 7kW wallbox, a full charge will take seven-and-a-half hours.

The ICE models are available in five trim levels with P11D prices starting from £20,505, while the Mokka-e, which can be specified in four equipment grades, has a P11D value from £33,785.

We drove both the Mokka 130PS petrol and the Mokka-e and, like its styling and build quality, the model is much-improved over its predecessor.

The infotainment touchscreen is contained in one sweeping unit

	FLEET PICK 1.2 100PS ELITE NAV
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£22,975
Monthly BIK (20%)	30%/£107
Class 1A NIC	£888
Annual VED	£175 then £150
RV (4yr/80k)	£7,259 (32%)
Fuel cost (ppm)	10.45
AFR (ppm)	10
Running cost (4yr/80k)	34.09ppm
CO_2 (g/km)	125
Mpg	51.4

HYUNDAI TUCSON

Monumental leap sees new SUV take the game to premium-badged models

By Matt de Prez

It's not often a new car takes such a monumental leap over its predecessor, but to say the Hyundai Tucson has upped its game would be an understatement.

The previous generation car had not-very-fleet-friendly powertrains and total lack of desirability. But, as a practical family car, it ticked all the boxes.

The new version has wiped the slate clean and now targets not only the traditional Tucson customer but also looks to steal sales from premium-badged models.

It's good news for company car drivers, because the new Tucson is offered with mild hybrid, hybrid and plug-in hybrid engines that give more attractive benefit-in-kind (BIK) bills.

The Tucson's futuristic styling helps to set it apart from rivals. Its unique grille and multiple LED light arrangement at the front helps it turn heads while the rear-end benefits from a similarly distinctive one-piece wraparound taillight that gives the Tucson real road presence.

Inside, the modern and upmarket design continues with improved material quality and healthy array of gadgets. The steering wheel and gear selector switches are particularly high-end in both feel and design.

The steering wheel and gear selector are high-end

The instruments are fully digital and use the same type of high-resolution display as the central touchscreen. All the buttons on the dash are touch-sensitive, but Hyundai has included controls for key functions so drivers won't have to hunt around in the infotainment system when they want to turn up the heating.

None of the outgoing model's practicality is lost in the redesign, either. The new Tucson is longer, wider and taller, with added passenger space and a boot volume of up to 620 litres dependent on powertrain.

Of course, these upgrades come at a price and the new model is considerably more expensive, starting at £27,900 – an increase of £4,175.

The 230PS hybrid model we tested, which emits 130g/km of CO_2, can be had for £34,235 in mid-range Premium Trim. That's a grand more than the previously most expensive Tucson, but surprisingly still good value when compared with a similar spec VW Tiguan.

All Tucsons use a 1.6-litre turbocharged petrol engine. Entry-level versions have 150PS and CO_2 emissions of 151-155g/km. There's also a 48v mild hybrid version with the same power output, but it reduces emissions by up to 7g/km.

The hybrid is the most efficient and powerful choice for now and we were impressed by the model's ability to return close to 50mpg. The plug-in hybrid version will arrive in a few months with 265PS and an estimated 31-mile EV range.

While handling is not class-leading, the Tucson deserves another gold star for driveability. It delivers smooth riding on all but the worst road surfaces and in most driving conditions the powertrain is seamless. The car makes light work of long journeys and delivers much the same levels of refinement you'd expect from a premium SUV.

The new Tucson is more efficient, safer and better to drive. Prices will push the new model into different choice list grades, but even those looking at premium models should not be disappointed.

	FLEET PICK HYBRID PREMIUM
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£34,235
Monthly BIK (20%)	30%/£171
Class 1A NIC	£1,417
Annual VED	£165 then £140
RV (4yr/80k)	£11,351/33%
Fuel cost (ppm)	10.8
AFR (ppm)	12
Running cost (4yr/80k)	44.5
CO_2 (g/km)	130
Mpg	49.6

VOLKSWAGEN TRANSPORTER

T28 SWB STARTLINE 2.0 TDI 110

By Trevor Gehlcken

The editor always encourages road testers to give a balanced view in our reports and, if that involves a few niggles, so be it.

However, with the Transporter, I'm struggling to find anything I don't like about it, so the niggles listed below are more like nit-picks and in no way lessen my admiration for this oh-so-capable fleet performer.

As a six-footer plus I could do with a little more room in the cab (although the front end is on a par with all the others in the sector). Also, there is no USB port on top of the dash so my TomTom unit leaves wires trailling across the dash and down under to the nearest plug hole in unsightly fashion.

Meanwhile, at the business end, I understand that the full ply-lining is an essential fleet extra, but it means there are only lashing eyes in the floor, which makes it difficult to strap in some smaller items of cargo.

And at motorway speeds the van feels as though it could do with an extra cog over the five speeds on offer.

That's my sum tally of grumbles. Now if you wanted me to eulogise about all the Transporter's plus points, I would have to ask the editor if I could fill this entire page, a request I already know would be turned down.

So readers will just have to accept my brief summary that, above gripes apart, the Transporter is as good as medium panel vans get.

Supremely comfortable seats, legendary reliability, a driving experience that matches many cars on the road, a stunning array of safety gadgets, fuel economy not far off 40mpg and the best residual value of any van on the road today.

What more can a fleet manager possibly want or expect for £23,655 ex-VAT?

CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS

FLAIR PLUG-IN HYBRID E-EAT8 PURETECH 180

By Gareth Roberts

Think of Citroën and you think of striking good looks and the promise of a comfortable driving experience. First impressions suggest the marque has achieved both with the C5 Aircross SUV plug-in hybrid.

There are design flashes inside and out which reflect an expected quirkiness from Citroën. The car's front end is dominated by its grill encompassing narrow LED lights.

On the road, Citroën's Advance Comfort Suspension – with additional hydraulic cushions at the end of the shock absorbers – gives a smooth, floaty ride at high speed, but rolls and pitches through bends. It also has trouble countering bumps at lower speeds around town.

The steering and handling are precise, however but the lane-departure system can test your patience.

The eight-speed automatic gear box works well most of the time, shifting quickly and effortlessly between gears. However, plant your right foot for a second and it has a tendency to get caught out.

AUDI A6

50 TFSI E S LINE

By Andrew Ryan

Motorists do not tend to choose saloons for their practicality as their bodystyle makes them less versatile than hatchbacks or estates.

A prospective A6 driver who needs maximum practicality is able to opt for the Avant estate but, for me, the saloon has been more than sufficient.

This is even with the reduced boot space our 50 TFSI e plug-in hybrid model has compared with a petrol or diesel variant.

Its 14.1kWh battery sits under the boot floor, reducing overall capacity from 530 litres in the ICE models to 360 in the PHEV, but the higher floor does sit flush with the boot lip, making it easy to slide items in and out.

The only time the boot size and shape has been an issue was when I planned to use it to pick up a new mountain bike.

Although the rear seats fold down to create a load space about six feet long, the height of the bulkhead was too low for the bike to comfortably fit in and, as I didn't want to take the bike apart in the Halfords car park, my estate-and-roof-rack-owning brother kindly picked it up for me instead.

BMW 530E

XDRIVE M SPORT SALOON

By Stephen Briers

While driving opportunities remain limited, regular trips for groceries and occasional meanders around the local countryside for a change of scene is enough to begin forming a picture of the BMW 530e.

The PHEV version of our current *Fleet News* executive car of the year shares many of the attributes of the diesel we tested three years ago (since refreshed with sharper looks and new tech). It's nimble, despite carrying a little extra weight due to the 12kWh battery, handling is incisive, it offers bags of grip and the ride is smoother than you might expect for a sporty BMW. It also comes loaded with safety technology and a high-quality interior.

The big difference (aside from benefit-in-kind thanks to the low CO_2 rating) is the performance: 0.62mph in just 5.9 seconds from a 2.0-litre petrol engine, substantially faster than the 520i and 520d.

But, let's be honest, we've spent far less time zipping along the winding roads of Lincolnshire as we have navigating the low speed B-roads leading from chez Briers to chez Tesco.

PEUGEOT 3008

GT HYBRID4

By Jeremy Bennett

With its fully charged battery providing a range of around 22 miles on electric-only power, it's got to be acknowledged most of the distance covered in this 3008 Hybrid4 will be done using its petrol engine.

But, how does that impact fuel consumption?

It's something *Which?* looked at, measuring the 'real-life' fuel efficiency of PHEVs compared with their claimed efficiency. It found that PHEVs were 61% less frugal, on average, than claimed.

So, how does our 3008 fare? Looking at the stats provided by the MyPeugeot app it reveals my average fuel consumption over a 55 mile journey was 165.2mpg. Peugeot's figure is 235.4mpg.

On longer trips, where the petrol engine does more work, the mpg falls to 75.3 – still creditable for an all-wheel drive SUV with such a powerful engine, but a way off the claimed figure.

Using its own real-world test data, *Which?* gave a figure of 67.3mpg for the 3008. We believe this is a pretty accurate expectation for the average driver. If you don't plug it in at all, however, the car will struggle to achieve more than 40mpg.

VOLVO S60

FIRST TEST

T8 R DESIGN

By Matt de Prez

Just as Volvo announced to the world its intentions to only sell fully electric cars by 2030, the brand's new XC40 Recharge P8 – its first electric car – arrived for testing and I thought it would be worthwhile to compare the two.

The XC40 sits on a different platform to the S60, sharing a base with the Polestar 2, rather than our car's SPA platform, which is used for the rest of the Volvo line-up.

While no specific plans have been announced to launch electric versions of existing SPA-based cars, Volvo has confirmed that the next XC90 will use an updated version of the platform and will be offered with pure electric powertrains as well as PHEVs.

In range-topping First Edition trim, the XC40 Recharge P8 has a P11D value of almost £60,000 and comes with pretty much the same level of 'kit' as our £53,605 (as tested) S60. Its two electric motors serve up 408PS, versus the S60's 390PS. So, the two could, potentially, appeal to the same driver.

I've no doubt the BIK of 1%, compared with the S60's 11%, will play a part in swaying opinion, but, in reality, the S60 is more refined, better riding and has a higher-quality interior than the XC40.

It also has the capability to cover 500 miles on a tank of fuel, while the electric car will barely manage half that when fully charged.

In towns and cities, both offer the same environmental benefits and the performance of the two cars is not dissimilar.

The XC40 feels more eager when you stab the throttle, but once the S60 gets into its stride the two can easily keep pace with each other.

As a petrolhead, I prefer the visceral experience of the T8 when compared with the P8, it just has more character. We have to face reality though. The drive towards fully electric fleets is already underway and, while it's not perfect, the XC40 P8 shows us that we have little to fear of an electric S60 – I'd just like to hang on to my one a little bit longer.

MERCEDES-BENZ A250E

AMG LINE PREMIUM PLUS

By Luke Neal

The current A-Class has an up-market, sporty look that's a far cry from the tall, MPV-esque A-Class of old.

This third generation car is aimed squarely at the top end of the premium hatchback market. It's a stylish car with a high end interior and a lot of clever tech and, on those points alone, certainly holds its own against premium rivals including the BMW 1 Series and Audi A3.

But, what is it like for practicality?

At 310/1,125 litres the boot space is smaller than a petrol- or diesel-engined A-Class, and that, coupled with the two fairly sizeable bags which contain both the fast-charging and conventional three-pin charging leads that live in the boot (built-in storage for these would have been a big plus point) the bootspace is slightly awkward.

Front passengers get most of the attention with plenty of leg room. The seats are fully electric, heated, adjustable and programmable. There is even a 'kinetic' setting which uses the electric motors in the seats to create small movements in the seat base and backrest every few seconds to help relieve any aches that might build up on longer journeys.

In the rear, there is no tech or adjustability. Head and leg room in the back are ample for younger kids and passable for adults. Six footers may find the restricted knee room tiresome on longer journeys and, while there is a centre seat in the back, it's raised and narrow.

Storage-wise, the A-Class fares ok. In the front there's a big central storage compartment between the seats with built-in charge points and two cup holders plus a phone-sized space in front of the touchpad. The front door pockets are large enough for a drinks bottle. Rear passengers get small door pockets, two cupholders built into a central armrest, two charge points and two air vents.

One of the things I love most about this model from a practicality point of view is the one-touch 'off' button. Hitting the start/stop button not only turns the car off, but also puts it in 'park' and applies the handbrake.

MAZDA CX-30 FINAL TEST

2.0 180PS 2WD SPORT LUX

By Sarah Tooze

Our CX-30 will shortly be heading back to Mazda to be replaced by the MX-30, the brand's first battery electric vehicle, which arrives in UK dealerships next month.

We've been testing the CX-30 for nine months, although with two lockdowns during that time it hasn't felt like that long behind the wheel.

On the occasions when the CX-30 has done longer journeys, fuel economy from the Skyactiv-X petrol engine, which features mild-hybrid technology, slightly exceeded the official combined average of 47.9pmg and is set to return to Mazda with an average of 47.3mpg, after 5,000 miles.

As previously noted, the CX-30 has a good level of standard equipment, including a blind spot monitoring system with rear cross traffic alert as standard, and a head-up display.

The latter proved to be non-intrusive compared with other systems I've experienced.

Although the CX-30 doesn't have the biggest boot in it class, it's on par with rival the Nissan Qashqai's (430 litres) and I found it plenty big enough for a family of three.

ŠKODA OCTAVIA

SE TECHNOLOGY ESTATE 1.5TSI

By Tim Rose

Some of the crucial factors for fleet managers considering the Octavia Estate include total operating costs, driver comforts and its ability to haul whatever its company car users need in their daily business lives.

Regarding the latter, I can report that it easily fits the brief. Škoda is well known for practicality and, with the rear seats up, the 640-litre boot space (40 litres more than Octavia hatchback) beats rivals such as the Mazda6 Tourer (522 litres).

During lockdown there hasn't been huge opportunity to stretch its legs. However a journey to the local refuse/recycling centre, accompanied by teenage children to help unload, showed our Octavia's comfort levels aren't diminished even when four-up and with a full boot. The low height of the boot lip makes loading and unloading a doddle.

On rare occasions when users need even more capacity – moving desks and chairs back to the office, for example – the rear seats drop down to almost treble the load space.

At 1,700 litres maximum, it'll happily swallow a couple of filing cabinets.

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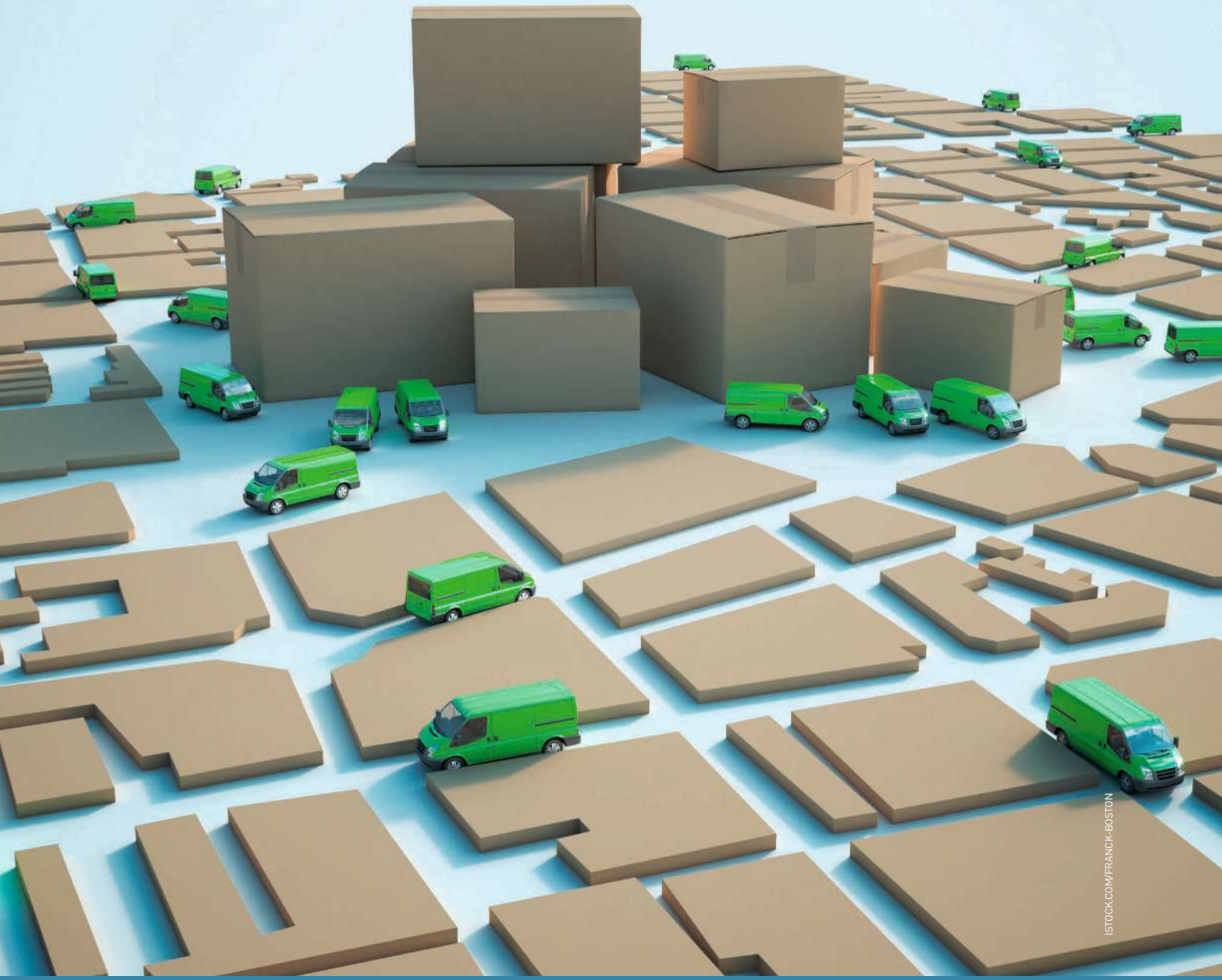
Nine ways to improve your delivery fleet

Ensure goods arrive in a timely, cost-effective manner, with minimal environmental impact



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PLUS: GOVERNMENT URGED TO SET DATE FOR HGV DIESEL BAN • Q&A WITH LOGISTICS UK • MERCEDES-BENZ ATEGO

Government urged to set date for HGV diesel ban

Consultation on implementation expected to launch later this year

By Gareth Roberts

The Government should ban the sale of new diesel-powered heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) by 2040. The National Infrastructure Commission, which advises ministers, says the road freight sector needs "greater support and faster action" to decarbonise at the rate needed to meet the UK's carbon emission goals.

The Government, it says in its annual report, needs to publish a cross-modal freight strategy this year, with a firm commitment to phase out diesel HGVs by 2040, along with detailed decarbonisation plans consulted on with the road haulage and logistics industry.

Ministers are promising the freight strategy will be published this year, while a consultation on ending the sale of diesel HGVs is also expected to be launched.

On the potential of a 2040 phase-out of diesel-powered HGVs, Volvo Trucks says its objective is to be fossil-free by 2040. By 2030, it expects half of the trucks it sells in Europe to be electric.

A spokesman said: "We believe the internal combustion engine (ICE) will also play an important role in 2040, provided it can run on energy from renewable sources, such as bio-LNG (liquid natural gas) and HVO (hydro-treated vegetable oil)."

At the same time, Volvo expects there will be "significant growth" in battery electric trucks for local and regional operations and, later this decade, for fuel cell electric trucks for longer and heavier jobs.

Mercedes-Benz Trucks, meanwhile, aims to have all new vehicles in Europe, North America, and Japan 'tank-to-wheel' CO_2-neutral by 2039.

"To achieve this, we're focusing on battery power and hydrogen fuel cells," explained a spokesman for Daimler Truck. "(We want) a combination which enables us to offer customers the best vehicle options, dependent on application.

"Battery power is suited to lower cargo weights and shorter distances; fuel-cell power will be preferred for heavier loads and longer distances."

The zero-emission roadmap for MAN Truck & Bus also includes the introduction of hydrogen-powered vehicles alongside fully electric models.

The manufacturer already offers series production of the MAN Lion's City E and eTGE as well as the eTGM electric distribution truck. A new all-electric truck is expected to be launched in 2023.

Apart from the rapid development of battery technology, MAN says hydrogen is a good complementary option as an alternative fuel for long-distance transport.

> "GOVERNMENT SHOULD WORK WITH INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP A LONG-TERM PATHWAY TO DECARBONISATION"
>
> **ALEX VEITCH, LOGISTICS UK**

ROAD TO ZERO

The Road to Zero strategy, published in July 2018, stated that the Government's long-term goal was the development and deployment of zero-emission HGVs. However, it acknowledged that the pathway to achieving this was not as clear as for new petrol/diesel cars and vans, which it will end the sale of from 2030.

A consultation will be launched later this year to decide the distance a new hybrid electric van or car can travel on zero emissions, to remain on sale from 2030 to 2035.

Logistics UK wants ministers to ensure there are practical alternatives to diesel HGVs before a phase-out of these vehicles is considered.

Alex Veitch, general manager for public policy at Logistics UK, said: "In order for the commercial sector to be able to deliver, Government should work with industry to develop a long-term pathway to decarbonisation, providing clarity on the technology and alternative fuels it supports so manufacturers and operators can invest with confidence."

FLEET OPERATIONS

The John Lewis Partnership has chosen biomethane as a low-carbon alternative to diesel as it gears up to stop using fossil fuels across its entire 4,800-strong fleet by 2030.

In March 2019, the employee-owned business pledged to be net zero carbon across its entire operations by 2050 at the latest, and its 600 HGVs to be switched to low-carbon biomethane by 2028.

A new biomethane gas filling station at its Berkshire head office is helping the conversion of the Bracknell Waitrose fleet to biomethane, complementing gas filling stations already in use near John Lewis and Waitrose regional distribution centres in Leyland, Lancashire, and in Northampton.

Serving approximately 120 Waitrose heavy goods trucks, the vehicles will run on biomethane made from food waste and food processing waste materials rather than diesel.

John Lewis estimates this will reduce CO_2 emissions by 80%, with each truck saving more than 100 tonnes of CO_2 every year.

In terms of plug-in power, DHL Freight and Volvo Trucks have joined forces to launch the first pilot test of a fully-electric Volvo FH truck with a gross combination weight of up to 60 tonnes.

Starting in March, the truck will operate between two DHL Freight logistics terminals in Sweden, a distance of approximately 150km (93 miles).

During the trial, Volvo and DHL say they will gain important experience and information regarding the set-up and operation of an "adequate" charging infrastructure, helping to strike the right balance between operated distance, load weight and charging points in daily road freight operations.

DHL and Volvo Trucks have combined forces to test a fully-electric Volvo FH truck

ZERO-EMISSION TRUCKS

The Volvo FL Electric and Volvo FE Electric trucks are already in serial production, while DHL Supply Chain recently put a new Volvo FL Electric into operation in London – the first purpose-built fully electric Volvo truck for city distribution in the UK.

At the end of last year, Volvo Trucks in North America also started sales of the VNR Electric, and this year will mark the sales start in Europe of the heavy-duty electric product range.

Following successful trials with operators in Germany and the Netherlands, Daf Trucks has launched an electric CF offering range of up to 200km (124 miles).

Available to order now, production of the 6x2 rigid and 4x2 tractor variants started this month.

Mercedes-Benz customers, including DPD, Hovis, Wincanton and Yodel, have been making use of the four-tonne payload of the 7.5-tonne Fuso eCanter since 2018.

This year it will launch its first fully electric truck – the eActros – with a 200km (124-mile) range.

It'll be followed by the Mercedes-Benz eEconic, a battery-electric version of the low-entry Econic.

"The first customer tests of this truck are being planned, and we know municipal operators are excited about a truck with zero emissions and the maximum five-star rating under Transport for London's Direct Vision Standard," said a spokesman for the truck-maker.

However, it recognises that it's not only electric distribution and municipal trucks that are needed, which is why it announced the Mercedes-Benz eActros LongHaul.

"This battery-powered tractor unit should be ready for series production in 2024, with a range of 500km (310m) on a single charge, more than meeting the needs of nationwide hauliers," the spokesman said.

"Looking further ahead, we have our fuel-cell concept – the Mercedes-Benz GenH2 Truck."

The production truck will have an operational range of up to 1,000km (620m) on a single tank of liquid hydrogen when it comes to market in the second half of the decade.

In the meantime, Daimler Truck and Volvo have formed Cellcentric – a joint venture to accelerate the development of hydrogen fuel cells.

"We have also signed an agreement with Linde to jointly develop the next generation of liquid-hydrogen refuelling technology for fuel-cell-powered trucks," said a spokesman.

GOVERNMENT HELP

The CEOs of Europe's commercial vehicle manufacturers, under the umbrella of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), joined forces with scientists from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), to publish a road-map and conditions for transforming the road freight transport system at the end of 2020.

It is calling for a dense network of charging and refuelling infrastructure suitable for trucks for the operation of low- and zero-emission heavy trucks.

Henrik Henriksson, chair of ACEA's commercial vehicle board and CEO of Scania, said: "If road freight transport is to maintain its role in serving society, we need to move away from fossil fuels as quickly as possible.

"We know it is possible and we are ready to make it happen. But we cannot do it alone; we need policy-makers and other stakeholders to join forces with us."

Ford tackles vehicle downtime with free connected maintenance solution

Sharing vehicle data will reduce unscheduled downtime by 60%, says CV head Hans Schep

By Matt de Prez

Ford is introducing a new free-of-charge connected service to improve the uptime of its commercial vehicles by providing operators with maintenance information and remote diagnostics.

FordLiive works on all new Ford commercial vehicles and all existing models that are fitted with a modem. In the UK, that amounts to more than 100,000 vans. It's part of the manufacturer's ambition to deliver 100% uptime for its customers.

Hans Schep, head of the brand's commercial vehicle division in Europe, says it's the company's biggest launch in Europe.

He said: "When we wrote the strategy for our commercial vehicle business, we decided the purpose was to make our customers' businesses thrive. Productivity starts with uptime, we need to make sure our customers' vehicles don't break down and are as efficient as possible."

The system works by sharing vehicle data with fleet operators and dealers. It means vehicles no longer need to be taken to a dealership for diagnostics as technicians can remotely view data from the vehicle from the previous 60 days to establish faults. Dealers can also reduce repair times by ensuring the correct parts are ready, in the event that repairs are required.

"People often call roadside assistance for things that are totally avoidable if the right person has the right information at the right time. This empowers our customers to make the right decisions," explained Owen Gregory, Ford commercial vehicles aftersales director.

FordLiive provides vehicle-specific maintenance information to fleet operators via the FordPass Pro app or a dedicated version of the Ford Telematics tool.

In addition to helping operators plan maintenance and schedule convenient service times, Smart Maintenance notifications help customers monitor and manage remaining oil life, AdBlue levels and tyre pressures to reduce the likelihood of unscheduled downtime.

The service is expected to reduce downtime by 60% and roadside assistance call-outs by 30%.

Ford is also launching three FordLiive centres, which will be staffed by dedicated product experts who can advise workshops on the fastest and most effective ways to fix a customer's vehicle.

The teams receive live data from Transit Centres to track every repair. If they detect delays to repairs or repeated visits from the same vehicle, agents will advise on the best solution to identify and fix the underlying issue as quickly as possible.

Future developments of FordLiive will include tailored uptime solutions that will be delivered to suit specific fleet operations.

Vivaro-electrifying British business

Winner of International
Van of the Year 2021
New all-electric Vivaro-e

INTERNATIONAL 2021 VAUXHALL VIVARO-e VAN OF THE YEAR

Carries British business

VAUXHALL

Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the New Vivaro-e Elite L1 3100 100kW (136PS) – 75kWh battery. Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 205 miles (WLTP).

The New Vivaro-e is a battery electric vehicle requiring mains electricity for charging. Range data given has been determined according to WLTP test procedure methodology. The figures shown are intended for comparability purposes only and should only be compared to other cars tested to the same technical standard. The range you achieve under real world driving conditions will depend upon a number of factors, including but not limited to: the accessories fitted (pre and post registration); charging frequency; personal driving style; vehicle payload and route characteristics; variations in weather; heating/air conditioning; pre-conditioning and battery condition. Please note, EV range assumes that vehicle has been pre-conditioned prior to journey. WLTP figure includes 50% payload. Please note, EV range is achieved in 'normal' mode. 'Power' mode will decrease range and 'Eco' mode will extend range although power, torque and climate control are limited. For more information, contact your local Vauxhall Retailer.

NINE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR DELIVERY FLEET

Home deliveries increased exponentially during the pandemic and the trend looks unlikely to relent, reports *Matt de Prez*

Demand for home delivery services has been growing for a number of years and the coronavirus pandemic has played a significant part in accelerating the trend.

A report from ParcelHero in 2017 predicted that online shopping would account for around 40% of all UK retail by 2030. The latest Office for National Statistics figures show online sales had already reached 34.2% of the entire UK retail spend in January.

As e-commerce becomes more popular, the pressure is on fleets and delivery companies to ensure goods arrive in a timely, cost-effective manner, with minimal environmental impact.

We've outlined nine ways you can ensure your delivery fleet is fit for purpose.

1

Choose the right vehicles

While a vehicle's load volume and payload figures dictate what it can carry, you also need to consider the practical elements.

A fully-loaded truck can carry the same cargo as approximately three panel vans; but larger vehicles burn more fuel, cost more to buy and are more difficult to manoeuvre and park, which makes them impractical in some urban settings.

Vans are more flexible. They can deliver a large quantity of items in a smaller timeframe and have simpler licencing requirements.

Some towns and cities require an even more innovative approach, however, which is why e-cargo bikes are growing in popularity. They don't offer the same speed or ability to cover long distances as a van, but they help to combat congestion and air pollution in the last mile. They are suited to operators who can transport goods to an urban hub and then swap them to e-cargo bikes for the final mile.

The main users of e-cargo bikes are parcel and post logistics companies, but an increasingly diverse range of businesses is exploring their use.

Supermarkets, including Co-op and Sainsbury's, have trialled them for home deliveries, while Yodel has expanded its urban bicycle delivery offering, operating in seven cities across the UK including London and Oxford. In 2020, the business delivered 150,000 parcels via pedal power and has set a new goal of doubling that amount in 2021.

2

Fuel type

Picking the right size of vehicle is only part of the challenge as more businesses are under pressure to decarbonise and operate zero-emission vehicles.

A survey by EO Charging found that three-quarters of UK adults would prefer to buy products from companies that deliver them in an environmentally-friendly manner and 72% would be likely to use a green delivery option if one was available.

One delivery fleet that is embarking on a transition to electric is DPD. It plans to cut final-mile emissions by 89% in 25 UK locations by 2025, using low- and zero-emission vehicles in place of diesel models.

Van fleets wanting to adopt electric vehicles have been hampered by both a lack of models and limited supply, however.

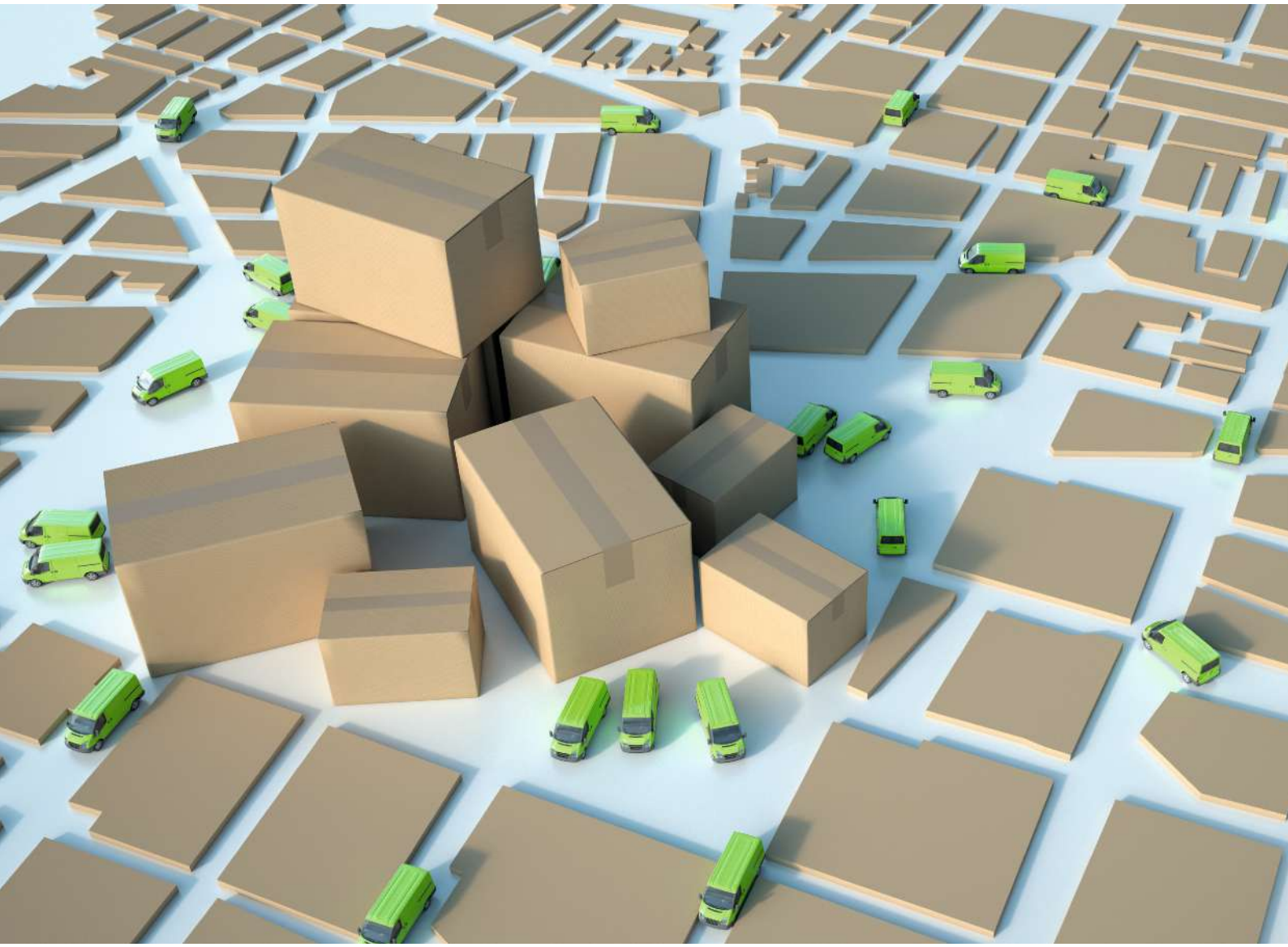
This situation is improving, but making the switch still requires significant upfront investment. Not only are electric vans considerably more expensive – although total cost of ownership is becoming competitive – many operators require the implementation of charging infrastructure either at depots or drivers' homes.

There's also the issue of range.

Fleets may have to adjust routes and schedules and take into consideration electric vans that can travel further between charges require heavier and more expensive batteries.

The results are often rewarding, with lower wholelife costs, less downtime for maintenance and improved environmental credentials.

The John Lewis Partnership is introducing electric vehicles for its Waitrose.com food deliveries and for smaller John Lewis deliveries. The partnership is expected to make savings of more than 20,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year.



ISTOCK.COM/FRANCK-BOSTON

3

Minimise vehicle downtime

Keeping your delivery vehicles moving is essential to an efficient operation and it requires two key elements of focus: a proactive approach to service, maintenance and repair (SMR) and a robust set of processes for dealing with breakdowns and collisions.

Chevin says the upfront cost of routine maintenance tends to be significantly less than that associated with any unscheduled downtime and fleet vehicles in a preventative fleet maintenance programme were shown to experience about 20% fewer SMR-related downtime days.

Fleet management software can help to plan and track the SMR of vehicles in line with requirements, while also capturing data from defect checks and flagging potential failures before they happen.

While the delivery sector is currently buoyant, consumer and customer demand will fluctuate, so fleets should also consider marketing and advertising their services to maintain longer-term contract levels during seasonal fluctuations.

"Long-term suitability of vehicles is also important – trucks, vans and cars which require more maintenance will result in more unplanned downtime. Sometimes it is more financially prudent to plan ahead and invest in newer equipment to avoid this," says Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) business services manager Paul Wilkes.

If vehicles do crash or breakdown, then access to replacements should be readily available to minimise disruption. This can be achieved by keeping spare vehicles on hand or by using rental.

Vehicle movement also plays a critical role in maximising utilisation. Vehicles need to be in the right place at the right time at short notice to reflect demand.

Calum Slowther, commercial director at vehicle movement specialist Engineius, says: "A good vehicle movement solution allows delivery companies to store their fleet at fewer operating sites and move vehicles more freely between them."

4
Prepare for seasonal trends

The challenge – pandemic or not – is knowing how many and what kind of vehicles will be needed from month to month. Fluctuating customer demand is a fact of life for the majority of businesses, but for those running delivery fleets, the almost overnight explosion of customers wanting to use delivery services due to lockdown meant they had to find extra vehicles quickly to meet demand.

This is where the concept of 'usership' rather than 'ownership' of vehicles comes into its own.

"Long-term rental solutions in the commercial vehicle sector can offer that extra layer of agility to company operations, that outright purchase or being tied into inflexible lease arrangements cannot," explains Stuart Russell, LCV sales director at Europcar Vans & Trucks.

Flexible long-term rental addresses the problem of changes in demand by providing access to a range of up-to-date vehicles, but without the need for a long-term financial commitment.

When choosing a supplier look for one that can provide a comprehensive range of new or nearly new light commercial vehicles which are Euro VI-compliant and comply with clean air zones. Check that they offer other services – delivery and collection and a verified hygiene safety service, for example.

5
Optimise routes

Route optimisation uses computer software to calculate the most efficient way for an organisation to complete its daily vehicle tasks. The algorithms make these calculations in a fraction of the time it would take a team of people.

Colin Ferguson, co-founder of route optimisation specialist The Algorithm People, says: "Our research indicates that only about 5% of fleets are using optimisation. This means that a significant amount of organisations are operating at a commercial disadvantage, because they are not realising the efficiency and cost-saving benefits."

There are very clear parallels with route optimisation and the development of the vehicle tracking market. Initially, telematics was only viable for the biggest fleets as it was quite expensive to install and complex to use. As the costs came down and the technology became more user-friendly, it opened up the market to the small- and medium-sized vehicle operators.

"Route optimisation is so well embedded in the big players that, today, they couldn't envisage operating without it," Ferguson added. "Our strategy is to make it cost-effective and user-friendly enough for the rest of the market, so it becomes an essential tool for them in their fight to cut emissions and costs."

Total fleet mileage can be reduced by up to 20% with effective route optimisation. It can also cut total transport costs by up to 30%.

"Urban routes are more congested than ever, and urban deliveries demand a lot from fleets. Delivery fleets that understand how to optimise routes reap the benefits in their bottom line. Optimised routes help drivers complete drop-offs and pick-ups as efficiently as possible, not only reducing fuel use but also helping to lower emissions," adds FORS's Wilkes.

ISTOCK.COM/ALPHASPIRIT

6
Improve risk management/compliance

For delivery fleets, managing risk can seem like a huge and impossible task. The global pandemic has led to a shift in how and when roads are used, with less concentration of traffic in 'rush hour' times and more pedestrians and cyclists on the road at unpredictable times throughout the day.

According to FORS, for this risk to be successfully managed, it must be considered across all operational tasks, from vehicle safety checks, tyre safety and maintenance, correct and secure loading, and even security and counter terrorism.

Wilkes says: "For last-mile delivery fleets, risk management should focus in the first instance on improving safety for drivers and vulnerable road users sharing the road. Unlike HGV drivers, car and LCV drivers are not subject to the same periodic safety training requirements in order to drive on UK roads, a fact which, in itself, significantly increases risk."

Fleet operators should implement a robust licence checking policy, which can be enhanced with e-learning modules and on-road assessments.

Telematics systems can also be used to encourage safer driving styles by monitoring the driver's acceleration, speed, turning and braking patterns.

Royal Mail is installing Trimble telemetry technology to 11,000 existing small vans and says all new collection and delivery vans bought will contain some form of telemetry.

James Baker, chief engineer and fleet director at Royal Mail, says: "The widescale expansion of telemetry in our fleet enables us to ensure our drivers are given positive feedback and training on how to drive in the safest and most environmentally-conscious way possible, while allowing us to continue to deliver letters and parcels safely, efficiently and responsibly."

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Reflex powers fleet insights with zero-emission test drive initiative

Supporting change by delivering first-hand experience of electric cars and vans to fleet managers

Reflex Vehicle Hire has launched its Electric Drive programme to give the country's fleet operators first-hand experience of plug-in vehicles.

As part of the initiative, Reflex is working alongside leading vehicle manufacturers to arrange test drives with fleet decision-makers who can then share their insights and feedback with the industry.

It comes as the Government recently stated that "zero must mean zero for greenhouse gas tailpipe emissions from new cars and vans" after its recent consultation on the planned ban on the sale of new vehicles that are powered solely by internal combustion engines.

Lisa Spong, Reflex Vehicle Hire Sales Director, said: "Reflex Vehicle Hire is powering the green mile with its growing zero-emission and low-emission fleet. Drivers have already covered more than a million miles in our green fleet and this initiative will ensure more fleet operators have a chance to experience electrified vehicles as they prepare their transport strategy for the future."

To request a road test as part of the Reflex Vehicle Hire Electric Drive programme, email sales@reflexvehiclehire.com

Customer case study

Embracing change with a phased strategy

Name: Jacob Telemacque
Role: Fleet, Warehouse and Logistics Manager
Company: Kings Secure Technologies
Fleet size: 172 (100 cars/72 LCVs)

Kings Secure Technologies is at the forefront of innovation as it uses cutting edge technology to keep customers safe and Jacob Telemacque is just as ambitious in the way he runs the fleet.

He is currently preparing a three-phase electrification strategy, starting with management cars, followed by engineers' cars and, finally, vans.

He has identified two key hurdles ahead – range and recharging.

While many cars can already cover hundreds of miles on a single charge, vans have a long way to go before they can offer the same flexibility, he believes.

"I recently tested the Mercedes-Benz eVito, provided by Reflex Vehicle Hire, and I achieved 75 miles from a full charge, compared with a WLTP range of 92 miles," he said. "Using the heater reduces range even further as well as payload, but some of our engineers can travel 40,000 miles a year in their diesel vans with fully laden vehicles.

"The industry will need a massive cultural shift to modify driving behaviour to maximise range.

"There are some electric LCVs that offer 200-plus miles that I am keen to test. But, in the real-world, range is typically 20% less than the official figures indicate."

His experience of the public recharging network is also a concern; four out of the five chargers he tried during a recent test were out of order.

Despite the challenges, Telemacque is positive about the fleet's electric potential.

"Even though the public infrastructure is not where it needs to be, this is not a reason not to proceed," he said. "It is simply a good reason to proceed cautiously and in phased stages.

"I will be really happy to have our first EV, with charging points installed at our offices. It is a really exciting time, but we have to make sure the technology is right for our business, as well as good for the environment.

"I believe we will see electric cars added to the fleet in 2021 and myself and Kings are very keen on reducing the fleet's environmental impact."

Visit www.reflexvehiclehire.com for more information about our flexible fleet service and green vehicle programmes

Reflex Vehicle Hire

7

Be aware of new technologies

Drones are expected to revolutionise the logistics industry, replacing vehicle fleets and drivers with self-driving (or flying) delivery robots.

Amazon was given approval by the Federal Aviation Administration to operate its fleet of Prime Air delivery drones in the US, and, although the online retail giant isn't ready to immediately deploy package deliveries at scale, it will use this permission to develop and refine its technology to integrate drones into the airspace.

The experiences of its testing will have huge implications for the use of drones around the globe. As well as the convenience – Amazon has said it wants to use the technology to make deliveries within 30 minutes – this will also bring environmental benefits.

Richard Gill, founder and chief executive officer of Drone Defence, says: "In the UK, 3.5 billion packages weighing less than 2kg are delivered every year, which is 25% of the whole of Europe's e-commerce.

"If half of these parcels got delivered by a drone this would mean 16,000 vehicles would be taken off the roads, one billion road miles – around 5% of our current level – will be cut and 250,000 tonnes of CO_2 will be saved, which, obviously, solidifies a potential use case."

8

Manage driver well-being

Stress and fatigue are both major factors in the mental well-being of a driver and if this is poor, then it can have a significant affect on their performance as well as their health.

Possible sources of stress for delivery drivers are unrealistic schedules, congestion and the behaviour of other drivers.

It can also be caused by a poor work/life balance, domestic/personal issues, poor work organisation and job demands.

Stress can impair sleep quality, which increases the likelihood of fatigue, which, in turn, can heighten feelings of stress.

It is vital that any mental well-being problems are identified so an employee can get the help they need to manage their symptoms, and reduce the risk to themselves and other road users.

9

Use the right technology

Good customer service is about more than just delivering goods; consumers and businesses expect greater visibility of their shipment with accurate arrival estimates and real-time tracking.

Vehicles with existing telematics can be easily integrated with tracking systems, but companies can also use mobile devices such as smartphones or PDAs to monitor the location of their drivers.

Webfleet Solutions' platform enables operators to share shipment information across different means of transport via open APIs. In this way, the delivery process can be seamlessly traced.

"Often not all vehicles and means of transport involved in the supply chain are already connected," said Taco van der Leij, vice-president at Webfleet Solutions Europe. "And even if they are, this data is only visible to the owner and can only be used in the direct context of the delivery. Shipment information and telematics data still come together too rarely."

CASE STUDY: CITYSPRINT

Courier firm CitySprint has witnessed a shift in the make-up of its offering in the past year with a huge uplift in support for healthcare deliveries, from PPE to Covid-19 testing, overflow support for businesses that are part of the vaccine distribution supply chain and even items to set up the Nightingale Hospitals.

While there was previously a high demand for long wheelbase vehicles, the landscape has changed during the pandemic and the need for small vans has grown through the increased demand for healthcare logistics.

The company performs around 80,000 deliveries per week using approximately 3,600 self-employed drivers. On average, it onboards around 25% more couriers each year and, as part of this growth, it has expanded its green fleet – particularly cargo bikes and electric vans.

Mark Footman, chief operating officer at CitySprint, says: "We recognise that climate change and sustainability are increasingly high on the agenda. To reduce emissions – both in London and other urban areas across the UK – while also operating effectively, we have invested in our green fleet."

The company has the largest courier pushbike fleet in London with more than 100 bikes. They completed 184,327 jobs in 2019, saving more than 258 tonnes of CO_2 emissions.

"Our green fleet is expanding rapidly this year as we support the roll-out of new clean air zones and the extension of the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. Our new Birmingham site has e-van charging fitted to support a growing green fleet also," Footman adds.

CitySprint uses Salesforce to ensure its operations are run in a way that is resilient and robust. Job information is located instantly, as are courier updates and tracking — all connected to the courier app and its operating platform. This ensures it can best support couriers to get the job done.

Footman says: "We also launched an eLearning portal to increase the accreditation levels of couriers, particularly to support the extra demand in healthcare services. This also benefited our couriers, who were able to boost their earnings by increasing the number of jobs they could accept."

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q We have just taken delivery of some new vans and have noticed they do not have any spare wheels. Our drivers are concerned this may be illegal. Are spare wheels a legal requirement?

A There is no legal requirement to carry spare wheels. Furthermore, if a spare wheel is carried, the MOT test – or any road-side check – would only deal with the way the wheel is secured. Tyre tread depth and condition, along with any other defects, will be advisory and will not result in a test failure or a vehicle prohibition being issued. From an operational perspective, you would need to put provisions in place in the event of a tyre failing during a journey.

Q Is it a legal requirement to fit wheel nut security indicators to our fleet of vans?

A There is no legal requirement to have wheel nut indicators fitted to vehicles. Wheel nut indicators are more of a company best practice and are there as a driver's aid to help identify any loose wheel nuts. The optional use of wheel nut security indicators can also assist with visual checks carried out by the driver. However, it is a legal requirement to ensure all the wheels fitted are always in good condition and secure when using the vehicle on and off the public highway.

ISTOCK/WKP-AUSTRALIA

Launch of anti-people smuggling campaign aimed at hauliers

In partnership with the Home Office and National Crime Agency, CrimeStoppers has launched a UK-wide haulier campaign – 'Say No to People Smuggling' – to crack down on Organised Immigration Crime (OIC).

For 10 weeks, materials will be displayed in service stations, washrooms and ports, and this will be supported by targeted radio and social media adverts.

In the past year, 59 individuals have been convicted for people smuggling offences and have been handed more than 142 years in prison time. Funded by the National Crime Agency, this awareness campaign aims to educate the public around ports and service stations to make them aware of the signs of how to spot people smuggling and promote reporting if they become suspicious.

It also aims to notify haulage drivers, who may have information about perpetrators of this crime, to contact CrimeStoppers if they wish to remain anonymous. However, given CrimeStoppers is not an emergency service, the material stresses that in an emergency you should always call 999.

The CrimeStoppers team believes everyone has the right to feel safe from crime, wherever they live or wherever they work. But, sometimes, people might be worried about a crime, or something that looks wrong and they want to pass on information. CrimeStoppers is an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up and stop crime, completely anonymously. It can be contacted by phone on 0800 555 111 or online (crimestoppers-uk.org), 24/7, 365 days a year.

Hauliers and the general public will be encouraged to let their concerns be known anonymously

ISTOCK/SERGHEI TURCANU

MERCEDES-BENZ ATEGO

Atego makes for a compelling alternative, provided payload is not a deciding factor

By Tim Campbell

It's been almost 25 years since the first Atego broke cover in 1998 and, since then, we've had a number of facelifts and 'new models' – three in fact. And the competition in this still popular lightweight 4x2 truck sector has continued to develop in that time.

It's with this in mind, we thought it maybe worth re-evaluating what the Atego has to offer the 7.5-tonne truck operator.

There are a number of variations available if you consider the different cabs, power settings and wheelbases, not to mention suspension and gearbox options. Taking all this into account, the best selling combination is the 816 day cab that will fit a 20-foot box van, curtainsider or flat.

	MODEL TESTED
SPECIFICATIONS	
Model	Atego 816 4x2
Cab	Day
Engine	OM934
Power	158PS (115kW) @ 1,800rpm
Torque	610Nm @ 1,200-1,600rpm
Gearbox	6 spd Powershift Automated
Front axle	3,600kgs
Rear axles	5,100kgs
GVW	7,490kgs
Chassis weight	3,902kgs
Wheelbase	4,820mm
Brakes	Discs all round
Tank	180 litres/25 litres AdBlue

In the 7.5-tonne range, there are a number of power settings, but the 158PS (115kW) rated at 1,800rpm is maybe the most popular with a torque of 610Nm rated between 1,200-1,600 rpm.

Diesel power is developed by Mercedes-Benz's own OM934 which is a comparatively large 5.1-litre engine, especially when you see that some competitors are operating at similar powers with a sub-four-litre power plant. The Euro VI D-compliant engine uses selective catalytic reduction and exhaust gas recirculation to help it keep under the more stringent emission standards.

We have seen the replacement of manual gearboxes in favour of automated versions in the heavy truck segment for decades and now this trend is moving further down the weight range; the Atego is no exception. Mercedes-Benz's own G 70-6/5.90 gearbox, featuring an overdrive 0.74 top gear with its Powershift 3 automated system, is proving to be a popular choice amongst most recent buyers.

A typical distribution box van or curtainsider usually has a body length of approximately 20 feet, and the most appropriate wheelbase looking at the Atego chassis line-up is the 4,820mm. As far as suspension goes it sits on parabolic springs at the front and the same on the rear with the option of air if required. The front axle is rated at 3.6 tonnes and rear five tonnes, giving a load tolerance/latitude of around a tonne, and 215/75R17.5 tyres are fitted all round. To the left of the chassis is a plastic 180-litre fuel tank supplemented by a 25-litre AdBlue one.

As with all commercial vehicles at this weight, the Atego comes with ABS and ESP, the braking system has discs on the front and rear axles. The engine also features an exhaust brake as standard and completing the safety systems are lane-keep assist and active brake assist.

The gross vehicle weight is 7,490kgs and the 4.8m wheelbase with the S day cab weighs 2,761kgs on the front axle and 1,141kgs on the rear making a total kerb weight of 3,902kgs allowing for a payload of 3,588kgs. The gross train weight is 10,990kgs so the vehicle can tow 3,500kgs.

The ClassicSpace S day cab Atego is 2,295mm wide and 1,650mm long externally and 1,510mm inside. There is also an extended version which is 180mm longer.

The relatively low chassis means only one step is needed to enter the cab although this means a tunnel separates driver and passenger. The driver's seat is suspended whereas the passenger's is fixed and the cab features a roof hatch/vent, electric mirrors, heated- and electrically-operated mirrors and radio, with USB connection and Bluetooth.

The S cab is a pleasant environment to work in and the Powershift 3 gearbox has an excellent reputation. The combination makes the contemporary Atego a compelling alternative to rivals when payload is not the deciding factor.

THE LAST WORD

ANDREW EVANS

FLEET SALES MANAGER AT GARLAND ŠKODA AND WINCHESTER MOTOR GROUP

Given the car Evans would buy if money were no object plus his favourite movie quote, we trust it's safe to assume he is a Bond fan. We hope his kickboxing hobby leaves him stirred, not shaken

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is travel and see the world.

The song I would have on my driving playlist is U2, *With or Without You.*

My first memory associated with a car was my father buying his first family car, a Ford Sierra, when he left the Royal Navy.

A book I would recommend others read is – *A Del of a Life* (Sir David Jason's autobiography).

If money were no object, I would buy an Aston Martin DBS Superleggera 007 Edition.

My favourite movie quote is – "Bond, James Bond".

My hobbies and interests are watching my two girls play football at weekends and kickboxing with team BKO (Basingstoke Kickboxing Association) and Team GB.

My pet hate is people who promise, but don't deliver.

If I were made transport minister for the day – I would make city centres for electric vehicles only.

Why fleet?
It gives the opportunity to meet interesting people and build strong customer relationships.

How I got here
I started with Volkswagen as junior fleet sales executive in 1998, working for three different retailers. I joined Škoda in 2013 with Garland Motors to the present day.

Latest products, developments and achievements
The new Škoda Enyaq – the fully electric SUV. 2016 and 2017 LBDM (local business development manager) of the Year for Škoda and 2018 Sales Champion. 2020 Škoda accredited LBDM.

My company in three words
Loyal, family, business.

Career influence
Chris Edwards, fleet manager at Citygate – he gave me the opportunity to join the fleet sales industry in 1998 as a junior fleet sales executive. I can still call him and ask for advice.

What makes a good MD?
Good interpersonal skills and a strong financial mind.

Advice to fleet newcomers
Don't give up at your first hurdle, be prepared for the long haul.

If I wasn't in fleet
I would be working in the finance sector.

"IF I WERE TRANSPORT MINISTER FOR A DAY, I WOULD MAKE CITY CENTRES EV-ONLY"

Next issue: Rebecca Duckworth, chief sales officer at QV Systems

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Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Mokka-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 201 miles (WLTP).

The range and electric consumption figures mentioned comply with the WLTP test procedure, on the basis of which new vehicles are type approved from 1 September 2018. They may vary depending on actual conditions of use and on different factors such as: vehicle load, accessories fitted (post registration), speed, thermal comfort on board the vehicle, driving style and outside temperature. **You can obtain 15–80% of the vehicle charge in 30 minutes from a 100kW rapid charging station. The vehicle will rapid charge at a rate of up to 100kW, depending on the power of the rapid charging station used and will take longer to charge at a lower power. Rapid charging stations are available across the UK at various locations and their power rating varies, typically from 50kW and sometimes up to 350kW. For further information on public charging stations across the UK, please visit www.zap-map.com. *2021/22 Tax Year. †3 Day Test Drive terms and conditions apply and vehicles are subject to availability. Please contact your Vauxhall Retailer for further information. All figures quoted correct at time of going to press (March 2021).