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THE BIG PICTURE

With Company Car In Action set to take place in (at the time of writing) the next few days, hopefully basking in glorious sunshine, and our sister publication Rail magazine successfully hosting its huge outdoor exhibition Rail Live with an audience of around 5,000 across two days in June, our thoughts now turn to the Fleet News Awards on July 6.

Against the stunning backdrop of Ascot racecourse, entertainment from esteemed comedian and actor Russell Kane and 900 guests booked and ready to attend, this will be a Summer Garden Party to remember.

Preparations continue at full pace, despite the Government's decision to delay Step 4 of its lockdown-easing roadmap. Very little changes, other than a couple of minor tweaks that will be communicated with everyone ahead of the day.

Importantly, though, mingling will be allowed throughout the afternoon (apart from when the awards ceremony is on, of course), with one-metre social distancing.

We were oversubscribed with demand to attend, so to the lucky 900 who are joining us, we can't wait to see you – we've some special surprises planned as well.

To everyone else, look out for the July edition of *Fleet News* and keep your eyes on our website for details of the winners and all the pictures from the day.

We need your help

You should have received an email from us asking for your help with our reader feedback survey. We want you to tell us how we are doing – what's good, what's bad and what we need to be doing more of to be relevant to your business and to help you achieve your goals.

This is our first reader survey for five years and it's focused on our magazine, website and events. It will take about five minutes or so to complete and will help us to shape the future of *Fleet News* which will, ultimately, be as big a benefit to you as it will us. So, really, you're filling in the survey to help yourselves!

If you've not seen the survey, a link is on the *Fleet News* website homepage: fleetnews.co.uk/reader-survey

Thanks in advance for your support.

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

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Burning question:
What advice would you give to your 18-year-old self?

EDITORIAL

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Given I never set foot outside the British Isles in my first 18 years, I would advise myself to travel the world
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COMMERCIAL FLEET

Birmingham clean air zone now live as fleets also face expanded ULEZ in London

Possible impacts of stricter CAZs on businesses are the No 1 concern in *Fleet News* survey

By Gareth Roberts

Fleets are being urged to prepare for more clean air zones (CAZs) and tighter restrictions after the latest scheme was switched on in the Midlands.

Birmingham's CAZ was launched on June 1, but drivers of the most polluting vehicles were given "time to adjust", with charges not taking effect until June 14.

The daily charge for vehicles that do not meet the latest emission standards in the class D zone is £8 for cars, vans and taxis, and £50 for HGVs and coaches.

Exemptions are available, but anyone who fails to pay within six days after entering the zone faces a fine of up to £120.

Charges are based on vehicles meeting certain emission standards – Euro 6 or better for diesel engines, and Euro 4 or better for petrol.

Birmingham's switch-on comes after the opening of Bath's CAZ in March – the first such zone outside of London – which charges non-compliant vans, taxis and minibuses £9 to enter.

Non-compliant trucks and lorries, and buses face a daily charge of £100, but cars and motorbikes avoid any penalties in Bath's class C zone.

Final proposals for Manchester's CAZ, which is expected to go live in spring 2022, are expected to be revealed in the next few weeks.

The plan, which was the subject of a recent consultation, was also for a class C zone, with non-compliant coaches and HGVs charged £60, and taxis and private hire vehicles £7.50. Older vans and minibuses would be charged £10 from 2023 if the scheme is approved.

A clean air spokesperson for Greater Manchester said that final proposals will include the boundary and times of operation, proposed discounts/exemptions, vehicles affected and daily charges.

Its opening will come after the expansion of London's ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) to an area bounded by the North and South Circular roads.

Currently, the ULEZ occupies the same area as the Congestion Charge Zone in the city centre, but it will cover an area 18 times that size when it goes live on October 25.

It is estimated that as many as 35,000 vans and 3,000 trucks driving into London every day do not meet the required Euro 6/VI emissions standards and will be liable for the expanded ULEZ charges.

With further CAZs being planned, including a zero-emissions zone in Oxford, Ashley Barnett, head of consultancy at Lex Autolease, told *Fleet News:* "As we drive towards net-zero, CAZ charges will, inevitably, become tougher as they come into force in cities across the UK.

"It's an important reminder for fleets to continue to consider the latest and cleanest technology in order to stay ahead of any potential low-emission restrictions."

FLEET IMPACT

Concerns surrounding CAZs have been highlighted as two of the top three issues that car and van fleets believe they will face before 2026.

Findings from Arval Mobility Observatory's 2021 Barometer show that the top most common answers to the question, "what are the main challenges facing fleets in the next five years?", were, firstly, the introduction of stricter CAZs (35%), followed by increased vehicle taxation (34%) and then the creation of more CAZs (30%).

Barnett said: "Despite most modern fleets being exempt from these new charges, fleet managers need to be aware of the impact that CAZs could have on drivers, both now and in the future."

A *Fleet News* poll suggested that more than two-thirds (68%) of respondents were already operating vehicles within a CAZ, while almost three-quarters (72%) expected to do so in the future.

However, just one-in-10 had received help from local government to comply with restrictions.

Instead, a quarter (25%) of respondents said they were redeploying newer, compliant vehicles from elsewhere, with the same proportion avoiding travel within the CAZs altogether.

Almost a third (29%), meanwhile, said they were upgrading vehicles to compliant models, with one-in-six (17%) prepared to pay the charges and just 4% choosing to retrofit existing vehicles.

> "CAZ CHARGES WILL INEVITABLY BECOME TOUGHER AS THEY COME INTO FORCE IN CITIES ACROSS THE UK"
>
> **ASHLEY BARNETT, LEX AUTOLEASE**

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Transport for London (TfL) has allocated £52 million in funding through three scrappage schemes ahead of the ULEZ expansion, helping to replace or retrofit almost 10,000 vehicles.

The van and truck scrappage schemes were suspended last year, because the money had all been allocated to successful applicants.

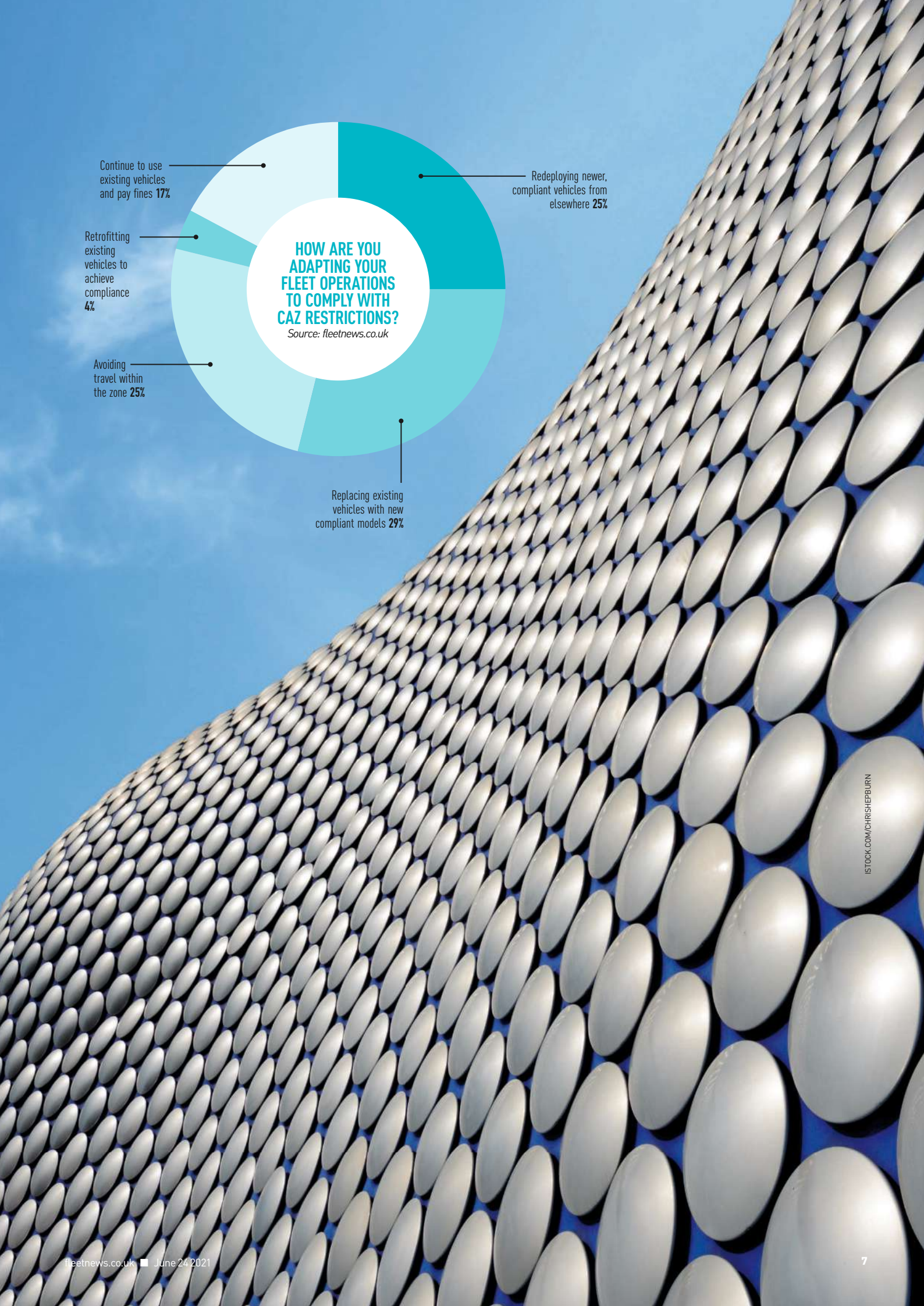
The scrappage scheme to help charities replace minibuses and low income and disabled Londoners to scrap or replace privately-owned vehicles remains open.

Alex Williams, TfL director of city planning, said the scrappage schemes had enabled 9,500 of the most polluting vehicles, including about 4,500 vans, to be taken off the road. "We just didn't have the money to continue," he said.

Birmingham launched a £10m scrappage scheme last month, but it is aimed at supporting people working in the city's CAZ who earn less than £30,000 per year (fleetnews.co.uk, May 12). They have also been given a 12-month exemption from charges, while they adjust to the new regime.

Birmingham City Council's £10m Heavy Duty Vehicle Fund, meanwhile, is aimed at small-to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the West Midlands, which are operating trucks, coaches and vans in excess of 3.5 tonnes in the zone.

A city council spokeswoman said that close to £2m of grants has either been paid out or allocated to businesses since the scheme opened in October 2020.



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"There are a number of support schemes in place for businesses in Birmingham and the West Midlands," she continued. "There are also temporary exemptions that apply to commercial vehicles registered within the zone and those with existing financial agreements."

In Manchester, up to £120m of Government funding will be made available by way of grants and contributory finance to around 30,000 affected owners and operators, who will need to replace trucks, vans, taxis, private hire vehicles, coaches and minibuses. Details are still to be finalised.

Bath secured £9.4m of funding from Government to help residents and businesses to adapt to its CAZ, with a further £1.6m allocated to local bus operators to retrofit vehicles not already compliant in the zone. A further £10m has been secured through finance providers.

Ashley Beighton, CAZ project manager at Bath and North East Somerset Council, says that funding has allowed the council to offer financial assistance through grants and interest-free loans to businesses impacted by the new air quality restrictions.

Around 32,000 vehicles a day travel into the zone.

"Our largest non-compliant vehicle is our older diesel van, so the focus of our financial assistance scheme is to get those vehicles upgraded," explained Beighton.

"Our hope is to get about 1,500 vehicles upgraded."

TELEMATICS TESTS

Beighton, who was speaking at the Virtual Smart Transport Conference, said that about 750 vehicles could receive funding after successfully undergoing telematics tests to see how the zone was impacting fleet operations. A further 550 vehicles are currently being assessed.

Leasing companies have also been playing their part. Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions (HCVS), for example, has been helping fleets analyse vehicle utilisation costs in and around CAZs.

"We're readily enabling businesses avoid the costs associated with CAZs and drive environmental efficiencies across their fleets by deploying electric or newer compliant ICE (internal combustion engine) alternatives," said HCVS managing director Jon Lawes.

"As many other local authorities prepare to introduce emission taxes on drivers, the challenge is working with manufacturers to improve the availability of electric LCVs for our SME customers."

DIFFICULTIES UPGRADING VEHICLES

It has not only been the availability of electric vans that is an issue, however, with lead times lengthening for the majority of cars and vans as manufacturers grapple with the global semiconductor shortage (fleetnews.co.uk, June 6).

Almost two-thirds of respondents to the *Fleet News* poll said that long lead times for new vehicles would impact their ability to operate compliant vehicles within a CAZ.

One fleet manager said that, although it had not been affected by the semi-conductor shortage, "many companies will be" and they may not be able to "renew or upgrade vehicles".

Natalie Chapman, head of policy for the south at Logistics UK, said: "Due to the shortage, some vehicle manufacturers have announced delays to production and in some cases, are pausing production at certain sites; this may make it more challenging for businesses to purchase the vehicles they need in order to reach compliance with various air quality schemes.

"Logistics UK is liaising with its members and the vehicle manufacturers' trade body, SMMT (Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders), to identify the scale of the challenge and help move the industry towards a solution."

Post-pandemic delayed renewals could also become an issue, according to Barnett. "With business priorities shifting since the pandemic and more employees working from home, some fleets have decided to delay renewals, resulting in older and dirtier vehicles being driven which may be subject to charges," he said.

"This includes those operating commercial fleets who may have held off replacements due to uncertainty in the market. Fleet managers might consider utilising their fleet more effectively to minimise costs by reallocating older vehicles to an alternative part of the country."

However, Barnett says the "bigger problem" could be with employees who have opted out of company car schemes in favour of a cash allowance.

"Unknowingly, a business may have a handful of drivers with older cars and vans which don't meet emissions standards and, consequently, are falling foul of the new restrictions," he said.

For the latest on clean air zones, including what is being planned and where, go to fleetnews.co.uk/caz.

Never a better time to embrace the cleanest and most efficient vehicles

ANDY EASTLAKE
MANAGING DIRECTOR, ZEMO PARTNERSHIP

The introduction of CAZs (LEZs – Low Emission Zones in Scotland) in pollution hotspots across the UK is an essential part of the policy mix to meet legal targets in these areas and, crucially, deliver cleaner air to residents.

With Bath's CAZ already live and other CAZs (or variants) due to start, or be extended, in Oxford, London, Portsmouth, Manchester and elsewhere in 2021/2, the challenge for fleets with urban operations is growing and will impact on future operating and purchasing decisions.

With Euro 6 (diesel), Euro 4 (petrol) cars, taxis and private hire vehicles (and Euro VI trucks, coaches and buses) meeting minimum compliance standards allowing access to CAZs without charge, there are still plenty of conventional vehicle options available.

Nearly all new vans built since September 2016 meet Euro 6 and all petrol cars registered since 2006 have had to meet Euro 4 with many complying before these dates.

However, fleets operating older diesel vans face one of the greatest challenges.

Vans and van-derived minibuses were one of the last vehicle categories to adopt Euro 6 emissions standards, which means there are more Euro 5 diesel vans and minibuses on the roads in legacy fleets.

While there are some retrofit solutions for specific vans, with more coming, they can be complex to fit and the cost is relatively high, so it may be cheaper to replace than to retrofit standard vans. There are a greater range of retrofit options now available for trucks and these are generally more cost-effective. There are funds available in many areas to help with the costs of complying through various routes

Encouragingly, there is now a growing range of battery electric vehicles in the van (and, now, even truck) category, giving operators the opportunity to future-proof their fleets, not only for CAZs but, potentially, zero emission requirements.

Costs for plug-in vehicles are falling and most fully electric vans are eligible for the Plug-in Van Grant, worth up to £6,000 for large vans (more for trucks).

Transport for London's LoCity project has a Low Emission Vehicle Finder (developed by Cenex) which lists 68 battery electric commercial vehicles, of which 27 are available now and 15 available for order or on request.

These range, for example, from the relatively long-established Nissan e-NV200 small van with a 40kWh battery and 124-mile operating range, to Vauxhall's Vivaro-e medium van with an operating range of up to 205 miles and options for batteries to best suit the operation (and pocket).

Fleet managers and van operators do, indeed, face a challenge meeting the new CAZ requirements. However, with the growing range of options available and the array of information and official support including incentives and grants, the CAZ challenge should be regarded as a 'prime opportunity' to make the leap into the latest, cleanest and most efficient vehicle for any operation, and a chance to show your customers how your company is clearly on its own path to zero emissions.

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Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Vivaro-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 205 miles (WLTP). Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Combo-e Life range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 174 miles (WLTP Provisional data). Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Mokka-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 201 miles (WLTP). Fuel economy and CO_2 results for the Corsa-e range 100kW (136PS). Mpg (l/100km): N/A. CO_2 emissions: 0g/km. Electric range up to 209 miles (WLTP).

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. EV range assumes that the vehicle has been preconditioned prior to journey. 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. Please contact your Vauxhall Retailer for further information. All figures quoted correct at time of going to press (June 2021).

Used van values up 50% in 18 months despite mileage and age increasing

Fleets retain vans for longer as lead times on new vans extend due to materials shortages

By Gareth Roberts

Delays to new van deliveries are helping drive used values to record-breaking levels as fleets hold on to vehicles longer and demand outstrips supply.

The average selling price of a three-year-old medium-sized van, with 60,000 miles on the clock, for example, is 58% higher today than it was at the start of 2020.

The data, from pricing experts at Cap HPI, reveals that the typical medium van was worth £7,550 18 months ago, but is now achieving an average selling price of £11,900 – an increase of £4,350 (see graph).

"The used van market is facing a real supply-and-demand crisis," said James Davis, customer insight director at Cox Automotive. "Demand for used Euro 6 stock (to comply with clean air zones) is rising month-on-month and we saw our biggest share of Euro 6 van sales in May."

However, with lead times on new vans stretching into next year as a result of the global semiconductor shortage, fleet and leasing companies are holding onto stock for longer (fleetnews.co.uk, June 7).

Vehicle production lines have been temporarily halted, focus has been shifted to high-demand vehicles, and some options are not being offered.

Furthermore, with the auto industry facing tough new emissions targets, lower emitting models have been prioritised in some cases.

> "THE USED VAN MARKET IS FACING A REAL SUPPLY-AND-DEMAND CRISIS"
>
> **JAMES DAVIS, COX AUTOMOTIVE**

Davis explained: "There are also other material shortages, such as rubber and metal, which are further affecting new van production.

"Early estimates indicate that it will not be until we get well into 2022 that some of these challenges begin to be eliminated and we can really start to talk confidently about a new and used market stabilisation."

Cap HPI told *Fleet News* that, even when new van volumes return to normal levels, production lost due to Covid-19 and material shortages will be "lost for good".

Derren Martin, head of valuations at Cap HPI, said: "The semiconductor issue could well not have

done its worst and these supply issues are likely to keep used prices strong for a good while yet."

NEW VAN MARKET

New van registrations are showing signs of recovery, however, reaching record levels in May as more than 29,000 were registered, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

A total of 29,354 new vans joined UK roads last month, an increase of 4.7% on the five-year pre-pandemic average and the best performance on record.

To date, more than 157,000 new vans have been registered this year.

Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor at pricing firm Glass's, said: "Registrations were up 289.3% versus the lockdown-impacted May 2020 and up 4.7% on pre-pandemic levels. The main drivers for this level of LCV demand are from increasing home delivery vehicles and essential service delivery vehicles."

Breaking down the results highlighted huge increases for all sectors. Demand for vans less than 2.0 tonnes rose by 384.2%, while registrations in the 2.0-2.5-tonne and 2.5-3.5-tonne sectors improved by 294.7% and 263.8% respectively. Pick-ups also recorded a 381.8% increase.

However, Picton said that further lockdowns and Covid restrictions in many European countries continue to affect vehicle production and the semiconductor, steel, rubber and even wood shortages continue to "compound" the situation.

VALUING USED VANS 'DIFFICULT'

Glass's auction data shows that the average selling price is 23.27% higher than the same point last year, while the average age of sold stock is 15.9 months older than the same point last year.

The latest average mileage is 13,061 miles (16.6%) higher than in May 2020.

Manheim auction data shows its average van selling price has increased by 47% since May 2020 (£6,591 vs £9,678), despite the typical vehicle now being a month older and having covered 5,000 more miles.

At Aston Barclay, average used prices have also continued to rise, increasing by 10%, from £7,080 to £7,801, during the past quarter.

"This is the highest average used LCV price Aston Barclay has recorded since its quarterly report was launched in 2019," said the remarketing company's national LCV manager, Geoff Flood.

In Q2 2020, average used LCV prices at Aston Barclay were £5,949, which means prices have risen by 31.1% (£1,852) in just more than 12 months.

"It makes valuing used LCVs very difficult prior to a sale as there is huge competition from dealers for every vehicle," continued Flood.

"Recently a 204PS 67-plate VW Transporter Kombi in black with 110,000 miles made £25,000 compared with a book price of £16,600. Another 16-plate 150PS ex-lease contract VW Transporter in silver with 100,000 miles on the clock made £4,000 more than book."

Shoreham Vehicle Auctions (SVA), meanwhile, says it sold a used 67-plate Renault Trafic van for £2,600 more than it did two years ago, despite it covering an additional 23,000 miles – a 28% increase.

It had originally sold the van in April 2019 for £9,000 with approximately 30,000 miles on the clock.

The same van was re-sold by SVA in May 2021, still in good condition, for £11,600 with 53,000 miles on the clock.

Average light commercial vehicle (LCV) values at BCA UK remained above £9,000 for the fourth consecutive month in April.

This was despite both average age and mileage of sold stock rising, by 19.4% and 15.8% respectively.

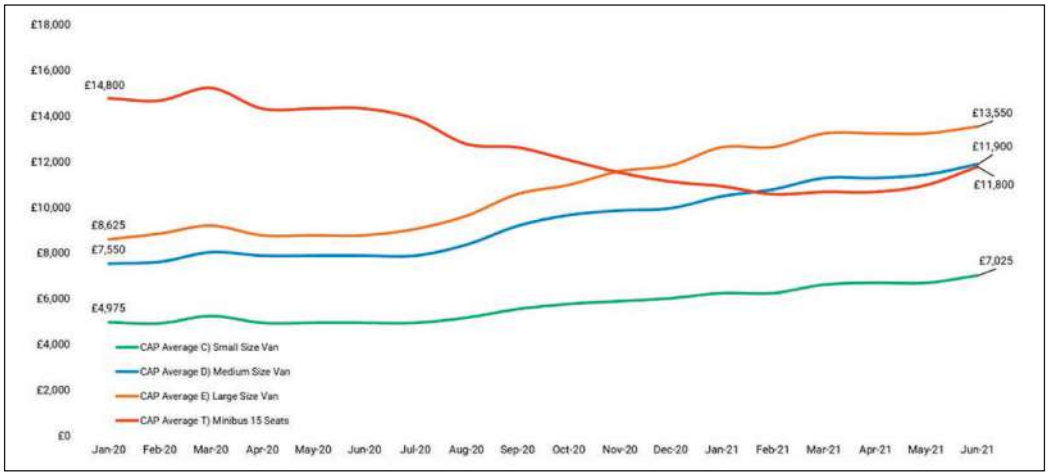
Values continued to outstrip guide prices, with significant levels of demand for any vehicle that can be "put to work" immediately, it said.

BCA has been averaging more than 107% of guide prices across the past month.

Stuart Pearson, its chief operating officer, said: "The used LCV market remains exceptionally competitive with buyer numbers continuing to climb, and average selling values at BCA consistently outperforming guide price expectations by a considerable margin. This is despite the average age and mileage of stock sold steadily increasing over the past year."

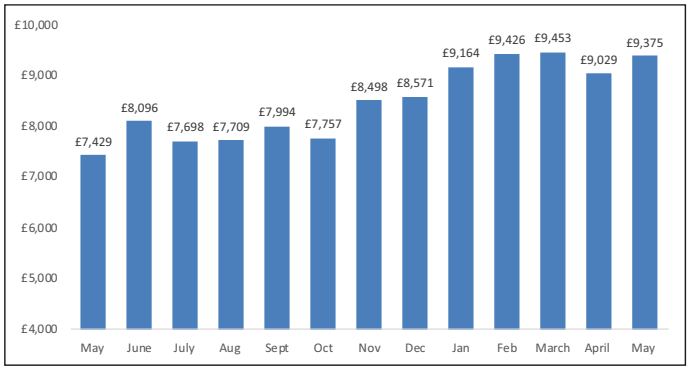
VAN VALUES FOR A TYPICAL 3YR/60K VEHICLE 2020/21

Source: Cap HPI



BCA MONTHLY AVERAGE VAN VALUES

Source: BCA Valuations



CLEAN AIR ZONES DRIVE DEMAND

Clean air zone (CAZ) compliance is helping to drive demand in the used market, according to Davis, with Birmingham starting to charge older, more polluting vans from June, and London expanding its ultra-low emission zone (ULEZ) from October (see page 6).

He explained: "Newer, cleaner, Euro 6 used vans continue to be a priority, with the sold volume share during May, representing 58.5% of total volume sold by Manheim."

A third (34%) of Euro 6 volume was sold to franchised dealers, up 8% month-on-month. This reflects the increased focus on used retail in the absence of new van volumes.

Davis added: "Many other cities are now refocusing on clean air plans as we exit the pandemic, causing further headaches with the extension of lead times, especially the enlargement of the London ULEZ to include Greater London later this year."

Long lead times on new vans, however, are forcing fleets to operate vehicles for longer, squeezing volumes into the used market when demand is high.

A business impact survey from the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) revealed the scale of the problem, with 90% of respondents suggesting that the current supply of vans was a barrier to meeting the needs of fleets – 41% said the barrier was "extreme".

There appears to be no respite either, with 84% thinking that the supply of vans is getting worse.

British Gas has revealed it is running vehicles that are six years old into a seventh year, to cope with the delays, while Altrad told *Fleet News* that orders placed in Q3 2020 were only now starting to filter through (fleetnews.co.uk, June 7).

BCA believes that, given the general increase in consumer activity as the UK economy slowly reopens, it is likely that the high levels of demand for LCVs will continue in the weeks and months ahead.

"We expect that demand in the wholesale arena will typically continue to outstrip supply and values will remain strong," said Pearson. "This is likely to be across the board in terms of product and age/condition profile as buyers chase stock that may be typically older or in poorer condition than they would usually buy."

EV reimbursement rate 'not fit for purpose' say fleet trade bodies

HMRC reviews rates for ICE vehicles on a quarterly basis, yet EV figure is unchanged since 2018

By Gareth Roberts

HMRC says it will listen to calls from the fleet industry to review the advisory electricity rate (AER) for electric vehicles (EVs).

The Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) and the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) have written to tax officials arguing that the 4p per mile (ppm) rate is no longer fit-for-purpose.

ACFO, which formed the AFP when it merged with the ICFM fleet training body, successfully lobbied HMRC to have the electric reimbursement rate introduced in 2018, with EV adoption rates increasing.

Advisory fuel rates (AFRs), including the AER, are widely used by employers to determine how much to reimburse employees claiming business mileage.

HMRC publishes updated AFRs quarterly for internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles such as petrol and diesel, but the AER has remained unchanged at 4ppm since 2018.

AFP chair Paul Hollick said: "The current rate is quite a blunt instrument, using the same rate whether for a small city runabout or a large luxury 4x4."

The AFP's electric vehicle, low carbon and alternative fuels committee analysed travel costs for all electric cars and vans available in the UK on a pence per mile basis.

For some recent additions, the 4ppm advisory rate has not kept pace with change

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Hollick explained: "Something like the (BMW) i3 or (Nissan) Leaf is still running at 4ppm, but the newer EVs, such as the Audi e-tron, are well in excess of 5ppm-to-6ppm."

The 4ppm rate was calculated using two key elements: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) figures on the average costs of electricity in the UK and efficiency figures from the battery electric vehicles (BEVs) on the market.

Both of these elements have changed. In 2017, the average cost of standard electricity across regions in the UK was 14.4p/kWh, in 2020 this figure stood at 17.4p/kWh, representing more than a 20% inflationary increase.

Similarly, the range of BEVs available has increased both in terms of the number of models as well as the types of vehicles.

A representative bundle of vehicles available in 2018 was able to travel on average 4.63 miles/kWh; a representative bundle in 2021 has an average of 3.69 miles/kWh, more than a 20% reduction in efficiency.

It is possible for an employer to pay more than the AER provided it can demonstrate to HMRC the true cost being incurred.

Hollick said: "That's fine for the big boys who can actually invest the time and the resources to effectively reimburse their drivers the actual cost. But, when you're an SME (small-to-medium enterprise) you can't do that."

Many fleet managers, however, have also not wanted to move away from the 4ppm reimbursement rate, because it will have been used in their wholelife cost calculations.

"They also question why they would want to pay more than 4ppm when the driver is saving all that money on tax," said Hollick.

"That's fine when you only have a couple of people in your organisation questioning the rate; it's more difficult now EV adoption rates have increased and you have more drivers who are complaining."

The AFP and BVRLA want HMRC to establish an ongoing review process for the EV reimbursement rate and for a separate AER to be devised for plug-in vans.

Furthermore, it wants tax officials to start developing a hydrogen reimbursement rate now, given the potential for more fuel cell vehicles on fleets in the future.

BVRLA chief executive Gerry Keaney said: "The current AER rate and the process for determining it is not fit for purpose.

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

Keaney says it is imperative that the tax system catches up, with reform of the AER process needed to ensure parity with the fairer process applied to AFRs.

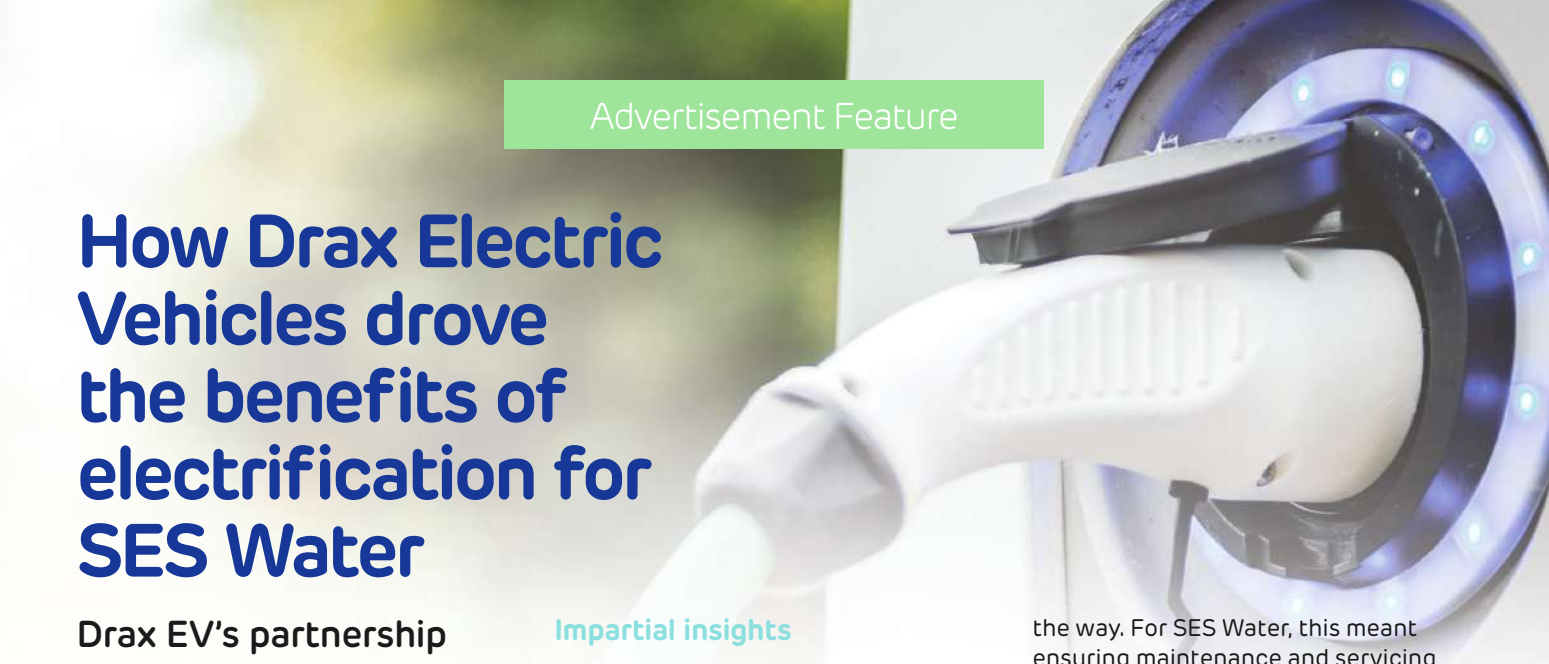
The HMRC spokesperson told *Fleet News* that it keeps all fuel rates under review, "ensuring they are up to date with the costs incurred by drivers", adding that it would "carefully consider" issues raised by industry stakeholders.

Hollick confirmed that they aim to meet with HMRC to discuss the issue further.

> "THE CURRENT RATE IS QUITE A BLUNT INSTRUMENT, USING THE SAME RATE WHETHER FOR A SMALL CITY RUNABOUT OR A LARGE LUXURY 4X4"
>
> **PAUL HOLLICK, AFP**

Advertisement Feature

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



Drax EV's partnership approach fast-tracked SES Water's electric vehicle (EV) trial – and extended the utility's electrification outlay.

The road to carbon neutral

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

SES Water identified fleet electrification as the next step in reducing its carbon emissions.

The case for electrification

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

Understanding existing fleet usage enabled the energy expert to identify the opportunities and impacts associated with electrification.

Drax's EV suitability assessment gave SES Water the confidence to approve a trial: replacing 10 diesel vans with EVs.

The assessment, based on existing vehicle telematics data, showed that operations wouldn't be adversely affected. It also provided a total-cost comparison – one of the reasons SES Water chose Drax – which projected cost savings, too.

Impartial insights

Manufacturer-agnostic, Drax based vehicle and charging-hardware recommendations on detailed market knowledge and analysis of the existing fleet.

Drax also gave fleet drivers and stakeholders the chance to try the recommended vehicle – Nissan's eNV200 – for themselves.

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

On-site, on hand

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

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

Delivering the goods

Supporting SES Water on the next stage of their journey to fleet electrification, Drax identified an EV-only leasing partner, facilitated a smooth EV transition, and made sure that the trial delivered its intended benefits.

An integral part of Drax's unique partnership approach means supporting customers every step of the way. For SES Water, this meant ensuring maintenance and servicing cover was in place, integrated telematics worked with their existing function, and charge-point software came complete with Drax's 'update, detect and correct' commitment.

The trial resulted in a carbon saving of

43 tonnes of CO_2 per year

Electrification expansion

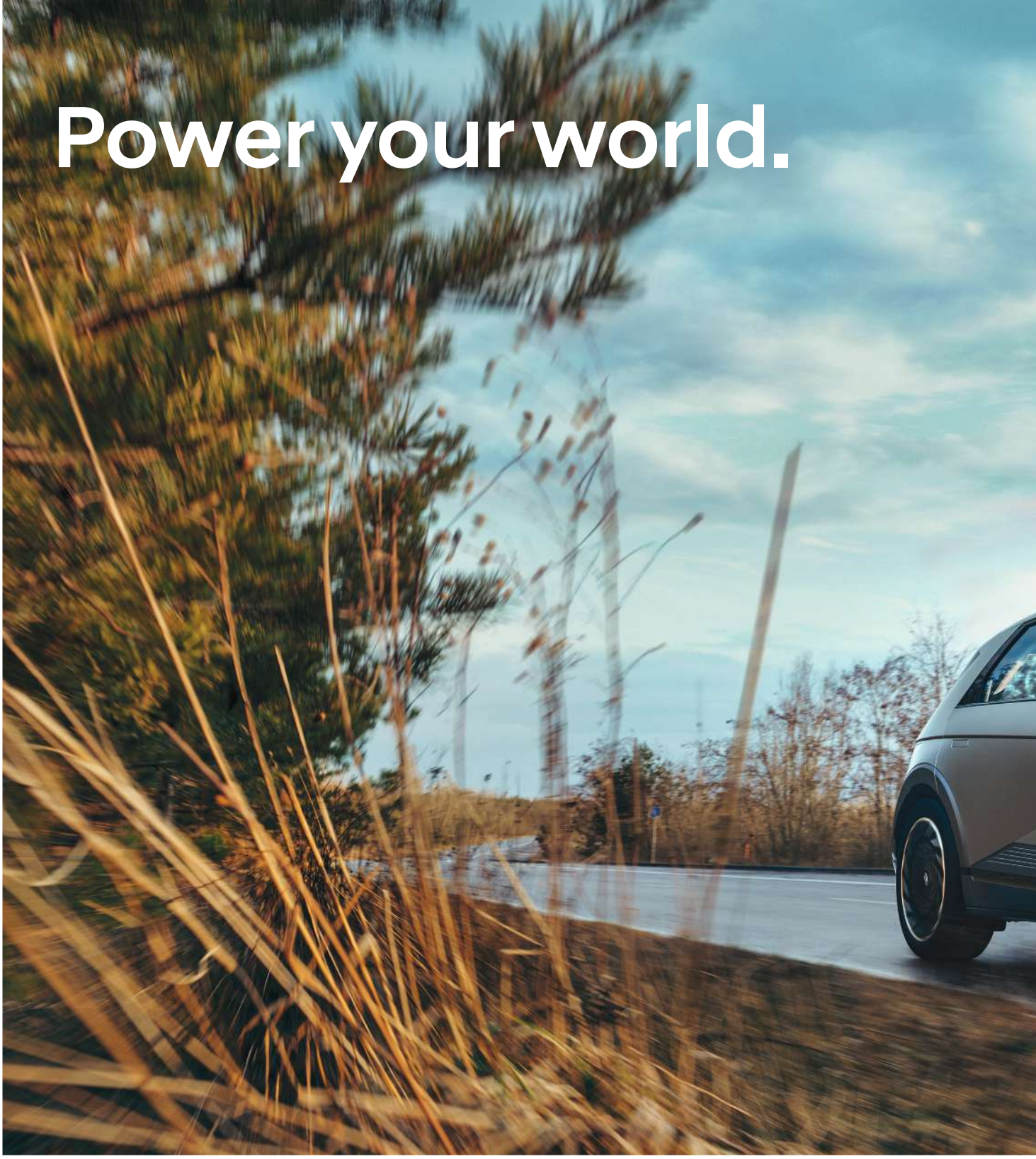
Eager to capitalise on the trial's success, SES Water expanded the number of active EVs and connected sites, and boosted charge-point numbers to 42 during 2020.

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

Partnership approach

Drax EV offer a unique end-to-end partnership approach that supports businesses through each stage of their journey. As experts in energy and EV markets, Drax EV is perfectly positioned to help organisations build on their sustainability ambitions through fleet electrification.

For more information on fleet electrification, download the 8 steps to electrifying your business guide: energy.drax.com/8-steps-guide



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DATA DRIVEN

A battle is looming over who owns and has access to the vast information generated by connected and autonomous vehicles. *Andrew Ryan* reports

The volume of data that connected and autonomous vehicles (CAVs) will generate in the future is staggering: Intel estimates it could be as much as five terabytes an hour per vehicle.

To put that into context for readers of a certain age, if that information was stored on blank DVDs it would fill more than 1,000 discs every hour.

This will include data about the driver such as their entertainment preferences, health and home integration, the environment the vehicle is in such as road hazards, weather conditions and traffic, as well as details about vehicle usage and maintenance.

In a world where data is becoming ever more valuable, the audit, tax and advisory services firm KPMG estimates that, by 2030, the global value of vehicle-generated information will be between $450 billion and $750bn.

This will be able to generate income for both transport- and non-transport-related companies with potential revenue streams including mobility-as-a-service (MaaS), insurance and targeted advertisements, products and promotions.

It will also lead to a transformation in how vehicle manufacturers will make profits in the near future, says KPMG.

"The weight will be shifted from vehicle sales over to digital services and shared mobility," the firm says. "Today, hardware is still the typical manufacturing company's bread and butter, accounting for more than 60% of the value with software and services making up the rest.

"As digital proliferates, the balance is shifting. The price of hardware is increasingly coming under pressure as the machine prices continue to drop, and software and services are expected to make up the majority of value in the near future."

One of the issues facing autonomous vehicles – that of who is legally liable in the event of a collision – is close to being settled. The Law Commission is due to publish its recommendations before the end of the year (*Fleet News,* March 2021).

However, the identity of who owns the data generated by connected and autonomous vehicles, who it will be available to and what it will cost to access have not yet been determined.

In addition, there will be a debate on privacy and data protection.

KEY POINT TO ADDRESS

"Data collection and sharing, whether anonymised or identifiable data, is one of the key points to be addressed in the short- to medium-term," says Lucy Pegler, director at law firm Burges Salmon, which was involved in the £5.5 million Flourish CAV project.

"Data is fundamental to connectivity and a critical part of the CAV landscape: it fuels the new technology," she adds.

"We need a structure to informed data sharing to ensure we can have a clear picture of what data needs to be shared in whatever form and the purposes for which such data will be used.

"This will, ultimately, enable policy and regulation to be developed in a targeted and proportionate way, and in a way that reflects the needs of a broad spectrum of stakeholders."

However, there is a real battle about who will be the gatekeepers of that vehicle data, says Toby Poston, director of corporate affairs at the British Vehicle Rental & Leasing Association (BVRLA).

"That vehicle data is key to many business models, whether it is mobility, repairs, insurance, or even things like where you're going shopping and where you're going to park, or how you're going to choose your next vehicle," he adds.

"We see individual regulators and policymakers like the Law Commission looking at this, seeing the massive impact of data, but then quickly narrowing their focus because it's just too big a nut to crack in one go.

"Our concerns are that things are already happening in the market, people are already being kept out of access to data and business models are being impacted.

"It's not just about access, it's also the terms of access. It's what you pay for specific data. What format is that data delivered in? How soon is that data live? Can you get that data privately?

"We've asked ourselves who is really going to get to grips with this data and really set the parameters. Hopefully that will happen at EU or UN level.

"This needs to be resolved quickly."

David Williams, managing director, underwriting and technical services at AXA Insurance, agrees the data issue is "a bit of a battle", but hopes "sense will prevail and there will be more open access".

Fully-electric shuttle buses in Cambridge are capable of carrying up to 10 passengers

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Beverley Wise, sales director UK & Ireland, Webfleet Solutions

The digital transformation of business accelerated exponentially during the pandemic, as organisations sought to strengthen their resilience.

Fleets have proved no exception. As management teams explored new working practices to streamline their operations and cut costs, a spotlight shone brightly on telematics solutions. Indeed, these proved pivotal in supporting remote working and enabling more efficient, automated workflow.

The worst days of the pandemic may now be behind us, thanks to the vaccine roll-out, but tech-led business transformation is set to continue apace, with industry innovations continuing to support fleet digitisation and connected operations.

In recent weeks, for example, Webfleet Solutions has brought a raft of innovations to market. These have encompassed new electric vehicle (EV) management tools to support fleets as they make the electric transition, including, most recently, charger connection reports to ensure charging occurs when tariffs are most favourable, and just before vehicles are needed on the road.

WEBFLEET Video, meanwhile, expanded on the fleet visibility offered by standard telematics platforms. The integrated camera system solution combines vehicle and driving data with advanced machine vision and artificial intelligence-powered camera tech to give managers a more complete picture of how vehicles are operating to enhance safety.

These followed the launch of our most durable and technically advanced driver terminal to date, the PRO 8475 – a versatile tablet that assists professional drivers inside and outside their vehicles.

Connecting drivers and businesses via the WEBFLEET fleet management platform, the tablet combines a range of features, including order management, driving performance feedback, apps for keeping accurate and reliable mileage records, and two-way communication.

More smart telematics innovations will be brought to market over the coming months.

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Project Endeavour sees Mondeos capable of Level 4 autonomy operating in and around Birmingham

"My view is there should be requirements for legislation to provide more open access on things like tools and manuals to enable the rest of the motor ecosystem to be able to contribute," he says.

"If we only allow the motor manufacturers to have access to that data, it won't be good for the consumer and will kill off a lot of what has been good about the whole motor space.

"I don't think it will be an issue for insurance because it's clear what we need and that will probably be mandated, but there are broader considerations. For example, you want the local repairer to use the data to be able to continue trading and you want people that provide aftermarket services to have access to data."

While there are few signs of productive discussions or an immediate solution to the issue, Pedgar says the development of the British Standards Institution's PAS 1882 standard could be important.

This is the first consensus standard to enable data collection and management for automated vehicle trials to support incident investigation.

"It's a snapshot of what industry can agree on now, but we also see it as a stepping stone to future requirements as the industry develops," he says.

As the discussions about access to the data produced by CAVs continues, two new trials of autonomous vehicles have been launched in the UK in the past two months.

Aurrigo has become the first firm in the country to undertake testing of a custom-made autonomous vehicle capable of carrying passengers on a main road surrounded by other traffic, including cars, lorries, cyclists and pedestrians.

Last month, it began operating three shuttle services on the two-mile route between Cambridge's Madingley Road park-and-ride and the University of Cambridge's West Campus.

> "WE'VE COMPLETED SUCCESSFUL TRIALS IN CITY CENTRES, IN RETIREMENT COMPLEXES AND AT MAJOR GOLF TOURNAMENTS, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THESE VEHICLES WILL BE SHARING THE ROUTE WITH EVERYDAY TRAFFIC"
>
> **DAVID KEENE, AURRIGO**

"We've completed successful trials in city centres, in retirement complexes and at major golf tournaments, but this is the first time these vehicles will be sharing the route with everyday traffic," says David Keene, chief executive officer of Aurrigo.

"The shuttles will run autonomously for the majority of the route using our in-house developed Auto-Stack driving software and the latest Lidar (light detection and ranging) and camera technology to identify potential hazards as they move around."

The trial is part of an Innovate UK and Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles-backed project, led by Aurrigo with Greater Cambridge Partnership and Smart Cambridge.

The fully-electric shuttles are able to seat 10 people outside of social distancing restrictions, while safety operators, who are able to regain manual control at any time if needed, will be on board during the trial.

The West Campus was chosen as Aurrigo says it provides the perfect environment to trial autonomous vehicles without the need to alter the vehicles or physical infrastructure.

Project Endeavour, which had previously been deployed in Oxford, has begun the second phase of its trials by moving to Birmingham this month.

This will see four Ford Mondeo vehicles capable of Level 4 autonomous driving fitted with Lidar, radar and stereo cameras, and integrated with Oxbotica's autonomy software platform, operate in a five-mile area around Lea Hall station, between Birmingham International Airport and the city centre. Trials will run throughout the day for several weeks, allowing the vehicles to experience a range of traffic scenarios and weather conditions.

"This stage of the mobility project is a new step for us, as Birmingham hosts our fleet of autonomous vehicles for the first time in real-life environments," says Graeme Smith, senior vice-president at Oxbotica and director of Project Endeavour.

Project Endeavour is part-funded by the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and delivered in partnership with Innovate UK. Launched in March 2019, it is designed to accelerate the deployment of autonomous vehicle services across the UK by creating a flexible, scalable model.

The project will culminate with a final trial in Greenwich in August.

CAM PATH TO SAFER, MORE EFFICIENT AND AFFORDABLE MOBILITY

There are compelling reasons for the introduction of automated driving, writes *Charlie Wartnaby*, chief engineer at Applus Idiada

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The push for the introduction of automated driving rests on compelling pillars: safety, economy, efficiency and inclusivity. Relieving humans of the driving task promises reductions in accidents; driverless operation offers reduced costs and more use of fewer vehicles; and affordable mobility becomes available to those who cannot drive.

Together, these benefits offer huge fiscal gains to the country, especially if the technology is developed and exploited in the UK.

Truck fleets have much to gain. Consider a driver able to sleep in the cab, tachograph off, while their vehicle travels on. Or a platoon of lorries with only the first manned, the others following in an aerodynamic, unsupervised train, requiring fast vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communications.

More immediately, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) such as driver fatigue monitoring, lane-keeping, automatic emergency braking (AEB) and blind spot warning all promise reductions in the harms and costs of accidents.

Connectivity will allow advanced warning of upcoming hazards or conflicting junction traffic, and speed advisories to smoothly pass through lights on green, reducing fuel burn and brake wear.

But the first 'eyes off' application covered by regulation is the automated lane-keeping system (ALKS). This will allow drivers caught in slow motorway traffic to legally attend to tasks such as email and calls while the vehicle takes full responsibility for driving. The benefit to commercial sales fleets is obvious and likely to result in strong demand for equipped vehicles.

> "GOVERNMENT HAS INVESTED SUBSTANTIALLY IN SIX CONNECTED AND AUTOMATED MOBILITY TESTBEDS"

The Government is working now to accommodate ALKS into UK-type approval. Another early candidate for UK regulation updates is the deployment of low-speed fleets for passenger pods or 'last mile' freight applications, which the Department for Transport has made a priority through recent tenders to create the necessary approval framework, with many novel aspects.

The UK at the forefront in the development of connected and automated driving technologies

The development, testing and approval of automated driving technology requires safe and appropriately equipped environments. Hence the Government has invested substantially in six Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) testbeds under the auspices of Zenzic.

Applus Idiada's Cavway site near Oxford is one of the six. It is under construction and will be ready for the first customers before the end of 2021.

Each testbed has a different focus and for Cavway, the key features are a motorway-representative track including junctions, and both private 4G/5G cellular and short-range controllable connectivity. Within the highway loop are supplementary areas for ADAS testing and smaller junction layouts.

These features lend themselves to testing near-future highway technology such as ALKS, existing ADAS features such as lane-keeping assistance and AEB, and truck platooning – the solutions being rolled out now or in the near future in car and truck fleets.

The controlled high-speed environment is ideal for inter-urban testing of the robotaxis that will comprise future mobility fleets.

Cavway has the key capability of being able to coordinate vehicle movements, network activity and digital traffic signals. For example, the cellular system can be brought down on demand just as a vehicle is attempting to merge between trucks in a platoon; emergency vehicle V2V messages sent from roadside units can spoof the approach of bluelight services; and digital signs can be timed to change in response to vehicle position.

These abilities will allow reproducible 'edge case' tests of awkward situations that could not be orchestrated on public roads.

Assisted and automated driving promises compelling benefits for the car and truck fleets of today, and the mobility fleets of tomorrow.

Proving ground facilities such as Cavway, the fruit of joint Applus Idiada and Government investment, provides the essential validation environments that make the safe deployment of those technologies possible.

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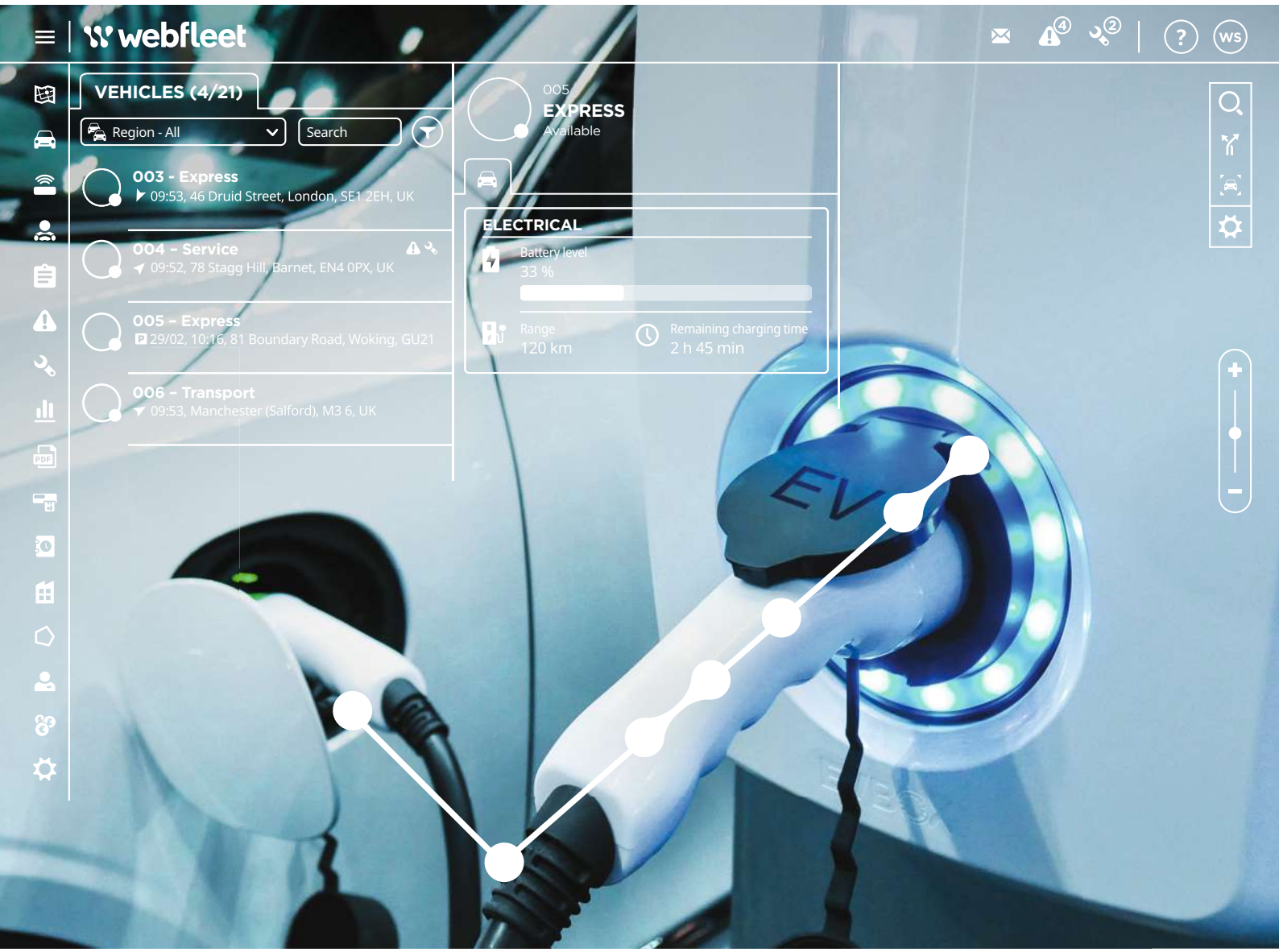

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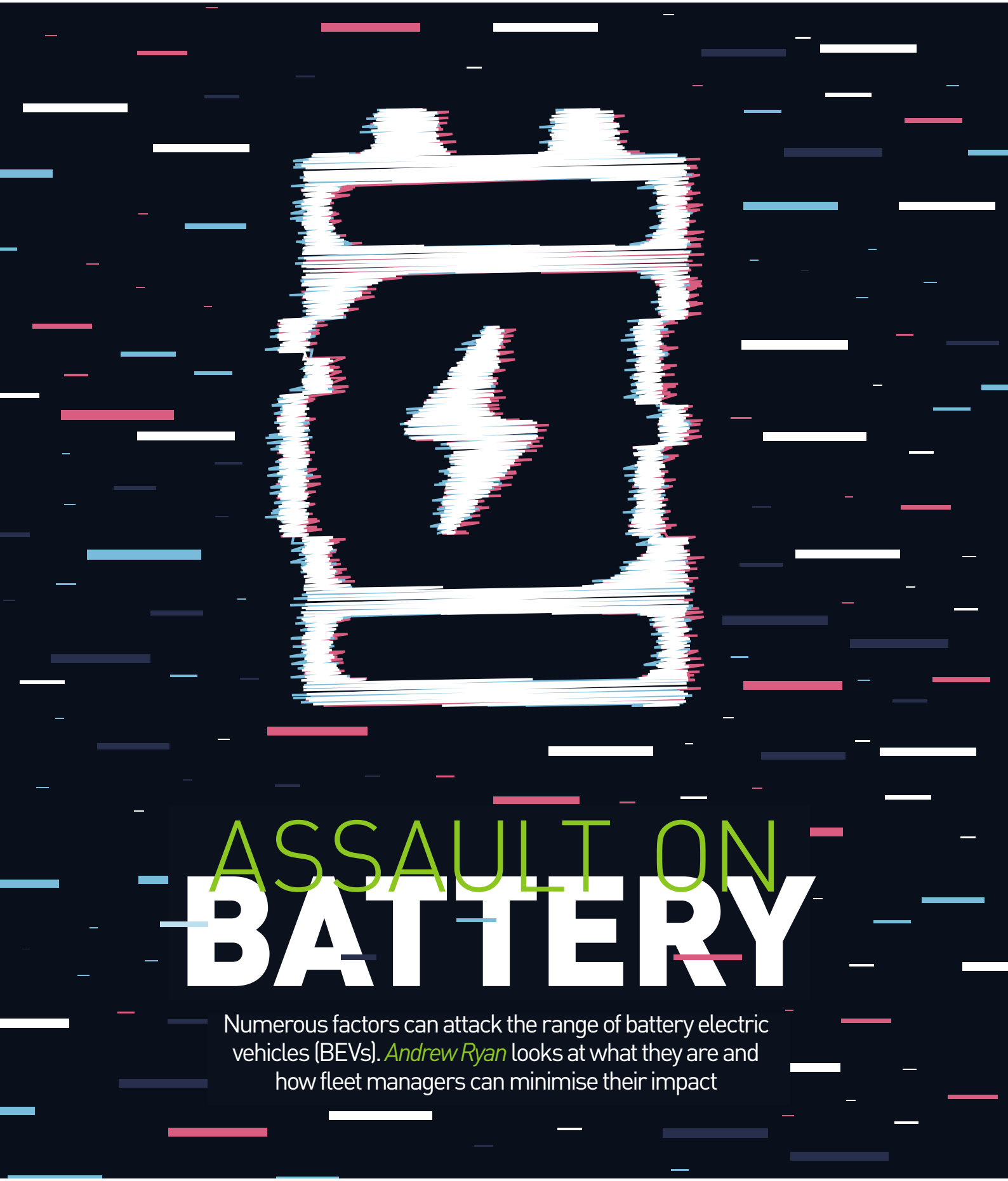

ASSAULT ON BATTERY

Numerous factors can attack the range of battery electric vehicles (BEVs). *Andrew Ryan* looks at what they are and how fleet managers can minimise their impact

DRIVER BEHAVIOUR

The way a battery electric vehicle (BEV) is driven can impact its range by more than 20%, making it the biggest influencer, says Tim Anderson, group transport manager at Energy Saving Trust (EST).

"We've all heard of range anxiety and that is one of the reasons people think they can't have a BEV. But this is why eco driving makes so much sense. You can visibly observe your range extending if you adopt efficient driving techniques," he adds.

Many of the eco driving techniques which apply to petrol or diesel vehicles are also relevant to BEVs, but there are some key differences.

"With ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles, we advocate anticipation, reading the road ahead, shifting through the gears quickly, making sure you don't brake or accelerate unnecessarily and maximising engine braking," Anderson says.

"BEVs don't have gears and, instead of the engine braking from an ICE vehicle, they have regenerative braking. It is key to maximise this."

When disc or drum brakes are used to slow a vehicle, two friction surfaces – such as a pad and disc – are forced together to convert the kinetic energy of the moving vehicle into heat, which dissipates into the surrounding air.

Regenerative braking works by turning the electric motor, which drives the wheels, into a generator which slows the car down and converts the kinetic energy into electricity. This is sent to the battery which can later be used to power the vehicle.

EST says energy recapture available through regenerative braking is around 10% through normal driving and up to 30% on descents.

BEVs still have disc or drum brakes dependent on the vehicle, but different levels of regenerative braking can usually be selected and, in some, the highest level makes it is possible to drive – by anticipating the road and traffic ahead – by using only the accelerator pedal, known as one-pedal driving.

"Switching between the different levels of regenerative braking in different environments will have a positive impact on range," says Richard Parker, corporate sales manager at Webfleet.

"On roads where much of the journey will be at a constant speed, the energy required to run the vehicle is not necessarily offset by increasing range through regenerative braking. The opposite is true of urban driving, where lots of stop-start can have a positive effect on the range due to the amount of regenerative braking. Therefore, for a fleet manager, the driver education piece is to get drivers to think about the journey ahead and switch the levels of regenerative braking accordingly."

As with ICE vehicles, driving BEVs at the right speed can have an impact on efficiency.

"For a petrol or diesel vehicle, the most efficient speed is between 40mph and 50mph, but it takes a lot of energy to get the vehicle going," says Anderson.

"Harsh acceleration has less effect on energy consumption in a BEV than it does on an ICE vehicle.

"With an electric vehicle there is a straight-line relationship between speed and energy consumption: the faster you go, the more energy you're going to use.

"There is no getting away from it, that is purely the laws of physics."

Research by the EST has found that driving at 70mph instead of 50mph will reduce battery range by 36%. Travelling at 80mph increases that drop to 48%.

"This is definitely a reason why you should not be driving your EVs mega fast, and one way to control that in a fleet environment is through speed limiters," adds Anderson.

As with petrol and diesel vehicles, telematics can be used to monitor driver behaviour and identify areas for improvement.

"Understanding how journeys have been undertaken, then coaching a driver on things like acceleration, coasting to junctions and driving at a speed that's below the actual speed limit will all reduce the loss of range and, therefore, the impact on the business," says Parker.

"Reporting now exists for EVs which shows, by driver, what the energy consumption is for the vehicle they are driving over the charging cycles.

"This enables fleets to measure the miles per kWh in the way we have historically measured miles per gallon.

"This will provide clarity for fleets to understand an individual's impact on range achieved for the vehicle and the potential costs for the business."

TEMPERATURE

The outside temperature can have a significant impact on the range of a BEV: the Royal Mail and Centrica have both reported a loss of range of 30%-to-40% in cold weather, compared with the summer months (*Fleet News,* February 2021).

This is due to both the effect the cold has on the battery chemistry and the energy needed to heat – or, in the summer, cool – the cabin.

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SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Nicola Austin, senior consultancy analyst at Zenith

Now's the time to plan for the fleet of tomorrow. It's vital to have a clear picture of your current fleet and its costs before redesigning your fleet policy.

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> "WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT A PETROL OR DIESEL VEHICLE, THEY PRODUCE A LOAD OF WASTE HEAT AND THAT'S A GREAT THING TO USE TO KEEP THE CABIN NICE AND WARM"
>
> **TIM ANDERSON, ENERGY SAVING TRUST**

"When you think about a petrol or diesel vehicle, they produce a load of waste heat and that's a great thing to use to keep the cabin nice and warm," says Anderson. "You don't have that with a BEV so you have to generate the heat and, if you are using the batteries to do that, then it is using extra energy."

One way to minimise this impact is to use the preconditioning function available on many BEVs through an app which allows the cabin temperature to be set on a timer so it is already at the required heat when the driver gets in.

"This way you're not using the power that's contained within the BEV's battery, you're using it from the mains power that's coming through the EV charger," says Anderson.

"The same with cooling as well – if it's a really hot day, get the vehicle nice and cool while it's plugged in."

Preconditioning also has convenience benefits for the driver, says Parker.

"Twice this year I've been sat in my wife's diesel car for 10 minutes, freezing, while I waited for the windscreen to defrost, not wanting to leave the vehicle unattended as I wouldn't want it stolen," he adds. "I would much rather be able to be sat inside having a cup of coffee and then just get in the car and go."

Another way to optimise the energy stored in a BEV battery in cold weather is to heat just the occupied seat and – if possible – the steering wheel.

"It's a little bit like sitting next to the heater," says Anderson. "It also uses less energy than heating the whole of the vehicle interior."

VEHICLE

Conventional wisdom may suggest the bigger the battery, the greater the range.

But, while battery size has perhaps the biggest influence on range, their efficiency differs between models, much like diesel and petrol.

This is affected by a number of factors, such as vehicle weight, aerodynamics and performance.

For example, while the Audi e-tron Vorsprung 55 SUV has a range of 233 miles from its 95kWh battery, it has an efficiency of 2.45 miles per kWh.

In comparison, a Hyundai Ioniq Electric is significantly lighter and less powerful, but can travel 193 miles on a full charge of its 38kWh battery, giving it an efficiency of five miles per kWh.

Fleets can maximise the energy stored in batteries by choosing the most efficient vehicles, and this has the beneficial knock-on effect of reducing running costs as well.

Data from KeeResources shows the E-tron will cost 5.85p per mile (ppm) to 'fuel', just over double the 2.67ppm of the Ioniq.

Over a four-year/80,000-mile replacement cycle, this means the Audi would cost £4,680 to charge, compared with the Hyundai's £2,136.

BEVs also have in-built selectable technologies which can help drivers eke out greater efficiency. One of these is regenerative braking (see driver behaviour section on previous spread),

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

ALTERNATIVE THINKING

OUR EV EXPERTS ALWAYS DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Your business, like our approach to decarbonisation, is unique. Our consultancy experts put the needs of your fleet first. We provide recommendations on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis and work in partnership with you to develop a bespoke transition strategy for a greener, brighter future.

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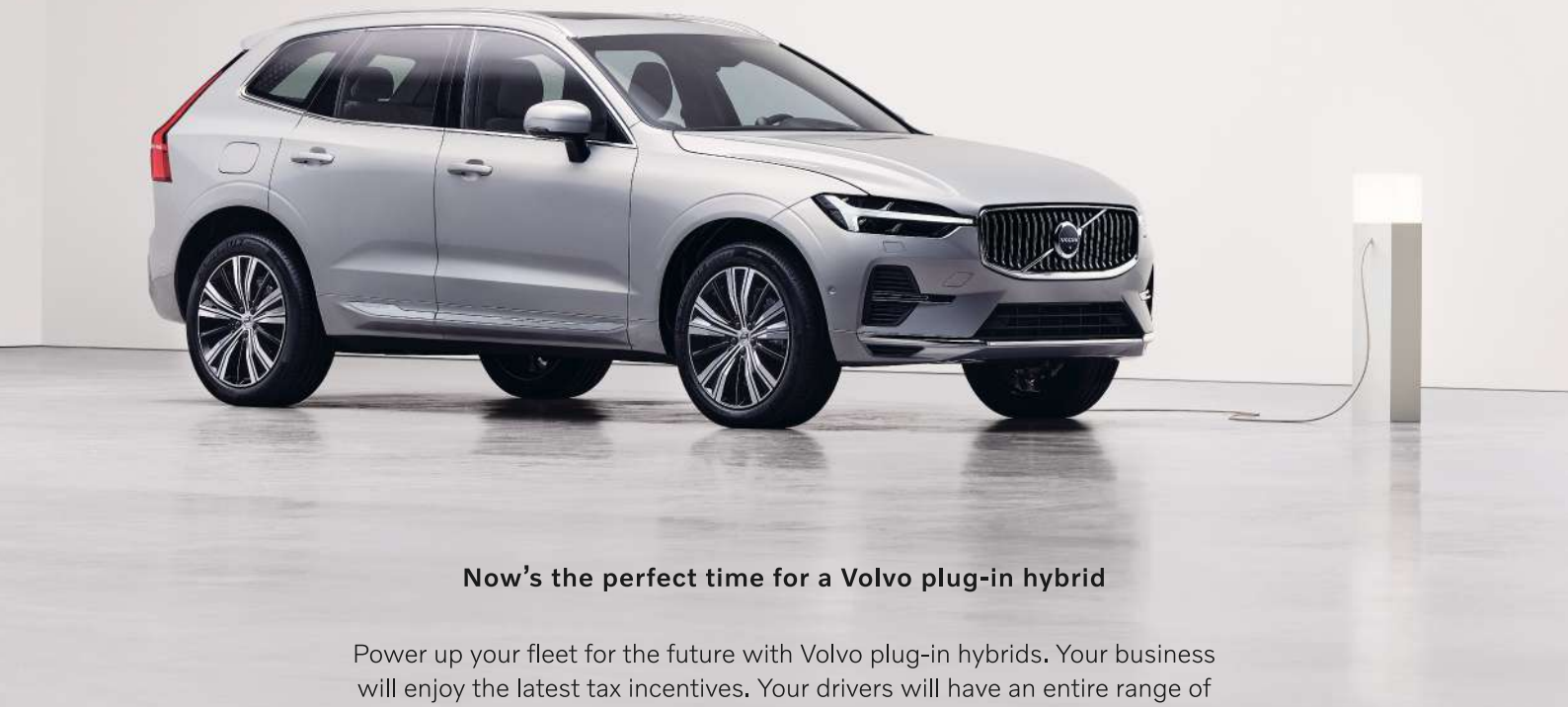

Now's the perfect time for a Volvo plug-in hybrid

Power up your fleet for the future with Volvo plug-in hybrids. Your business will enjoy the latest tax incentives. Your drivers will have an entire range of models to choose from, so they can move in a more economical way in a car that suits them. And you'll have our experienced team to support you on your electrification journey.

Key stats for the Volvo plug-in hybrid range

From 11%	**Up to 37 miles**	**From £37,290**
Benefit-in-Kind tax	Pure electric range	P11D

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Why wait to electrify your fleet?

Visit volvocars.co.uk/hybridfleet
or call the Volvo Car Business Centre on 0345 600 4027

Fuel consumption and CO_2 figures for the Volvo plug-in hybrid range, in MPG (l/100km): WLTP Combined 83.1 – 156.7 (3.4 – 1.8). WLTP CO_2 emissions 76 – 40g/km. WLTP electric energy consumption 3.5 – 4.3 miles/kWh. Equivalent all electric range 25.6 – 37.3 miles. Figures shown are for comparability purposes; only compare fuel consumption, CO_2 and equivalent electric range figures with other cars tested to the same technical procedures. These figures were obtained using a combination of battery power and fuel. The Volvo plug-in hybrid vehicles require mains electricity for charging. These figures may not reflect real life driving results, which will depend upon a number of factors including the accessories fitted (post-registration), variations in weather, driving styles and vehicle load.

while most have a selectable 'eco' driving mode.

This will do different things dependent on the BEV. The Renault Zoe, for example, uses its eco mode to limit vehicle speed to 56mph, reduce acceleration and cut the power of its air-conditioning system.

Similarly, eco mode in the Nissan Leaf limits engine power, while it also increases the regenerative braking. The manufacturer says its system can extend range by up to 10%.

"All these vehicles are different. They have different modes and settings, and some will have functions that really help with range maximisation, while others may not have those features," says Anderson. "Fleet managers should understand this and encourage their drivers to understand the specifics around each model."

> "THE IMPACT OF LOAD WAS RELATIVELY MINIMAL, ROUGHLY AN 8%-TO-10% REDUCTION IN RANGE WITH A FULL PAYLOAD"
>
> **DAVID WATTS, ARVAL UK**

LOAD

Fleet decision-makers can increase the operating range of a BEV by ensuring it is carrying as little weight as possible.

"Additional weight has always had an impact on the efficiency of the vehicles we drive. Educating drivers to remove unnecessary weight, as well as accessories like roof bars that add drag when not needed, will help prevent range erosion," says Webfleet's Parker.

Earlier this year, leasing company Arval UK carried out its own research in this area, using electric vans with a full payload, a half payload and no payload over the real driving emissions (RDE) test course at Millbrook Proving Ground.

The 45-mile route includes an equal mix of urban, rural and motorway sections.

"The impact of load was relatively minimal," says David Watts, senior consultant at Arval UK. "You were looking at roughly an 8%-to-10% reduction in range with a full payload, which is probably not dissimilar to what you would see in a petrol or diesel vehicle."

TYRES

As with petrol and diesel vehicles, running incorrectly inflated tyres on a BEV can have a negative impact on its efficiency.

"Data suggests that about 25% of the vehicles on our roads have improperly inflated tyres," says Parker.

"Figures show for every 1psi drop in pressure from the correct level there is a 0.3% drop in economy or range.

"BEVs are generally heavier than their equivalent ICE vehicles, so the impact of under-inflation increasing rolling resistance is more pronounced."

It is also important fleets make the right choice when it comes to replacing a BEV's tyres, says Dan Joyce, fleet director for Kwik Fit (GB).

"Most EV marques come with homologated tyres, meaning they are specifically designed in line with the OE requirements for the vehicle," he adds.

"In the case of EVs, that means a tyre designed originally to maintain range along with the usual attributes such as grip, noise reduction, wet and dry performance.

"Homologated tyres are also designed to consider the additional weight and torque specific to BEVs.

"Changing to a non-homologated tyre can have a detrimental impact on rolling resistance, meaning range is impacted and the vehicle will not have the same performance as it did before."

Part 2

ELECTRIC VANS

Vans are lagging way behind cars in terms of electric vehicle take-up. Yet the deadline to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans is the same – 2030. *Stephen Briers* reports

The development and introduction of electric vans is lagging behind cars despite the keenness of larger organisations to begin adopting them on their fleets in the build-up to the 2030 ban on sales of new petrol and diesel light commercials.

More than 30 battery electric cars and 60 plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) are available in the UK, but there are just 16 full-electric vans and three plug-ins – and the majority of these are the smaller vehicles. Wanting a large 3.5-tonne electric panel van? Fleets currently have a choice of the Fiat e-Ducato, Iveco Daily Electric, Maxxus eDeliver 9, Mercedes-Benz eSprinter or Renault Master ZE.

Interestingly, in contrast to the car market, where PHEV is seen as a stepping-stone to full electric, most van manufacturers have opted to skip the plug-in option and go straight to full-electric in their product planning.

Consequently, the overall uptake of electric vans among more than 200 fleet respondents to a *Fleet News* survey, sponsored by BP, is slightly higher than PHEVs, while significantly more individual companies are running full-electric.

BEV accounts for an average of 2% of vans on the fleets of survey participants, compared with 8% of cars (a rise on the 6% quoted in the May issue due to some additional responses), with PHEV at 1% of vans, compared with 13% of cars.

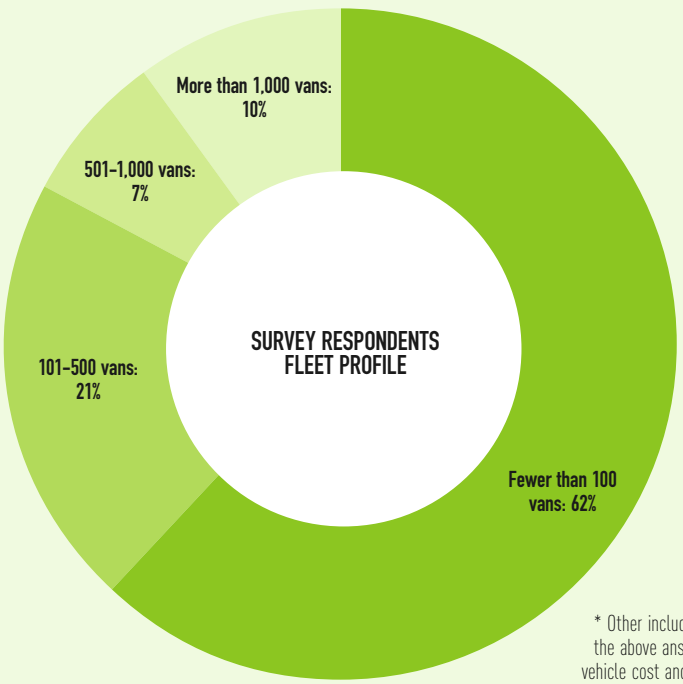
Just 10% of respondents – 22 companies – account for all the plug-in vans while 21% – 46 companies – have some BEVs on their fleet.

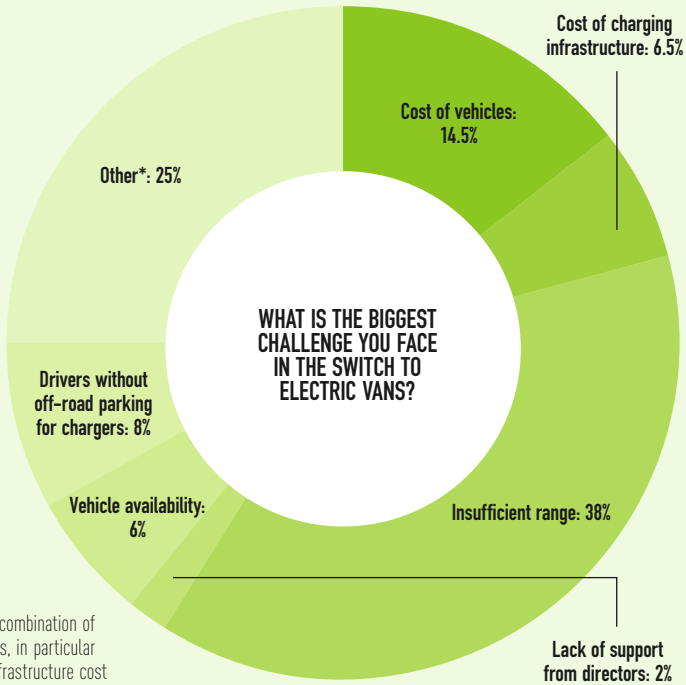
Just more than three-quarters (76%) of fleet respondents are yet to add any ultra-low emission BEV or PHEV vans to their fleets and the picture doesn't brighten much when considering the vans these fleets have on order.

PHEV comes as little surprise but should be an awakening for the handful of manufacturers still investing in plug-in technology. Just 5% of fleets have them on order, and they account for less than 2% of all their current orders.

The situation is healthier with full-electric, with 15% of fleets having some on order and they account for 4% of all van orders on average. Pinpointing only those 15% of companies that have placed an order for at least one BEV reveals the high level of commitment they have to making the switch; electric accounts for 28% of their orders on average.

Five businesses are now only ordering full-electric vans. They come from a disparate range





* Other includes combination of the above answers, in particular vehicle cost and infrastructure cost

of industries and varying sizes, from a fleet operating more than 1,000 vans in the utilities sector and one in the transport sector with 500-plus vans, to sub-100 van fleets in IT, bluelight and construction sectors.

Of those businesses yet to add any electric vehicles – full or hybrid - to their fleet, 18% have no intention to make the switch until forced to by the 2030 ban. More than half, though (57%), say they will start adding EVs within the next two years, with a further 20% expecting to have them on fleet by the middle of the decade.

Leasing is by far the most popular funding method for alternative fuels, with several fleets that traditionally outright purchase opting for contract hire for electric as it gives greater certainty over residual values and strong total cost of ownership (TCO).

As Steve Winter, heads of fleet at British Gas, says: "Leasing can reduce the risk."

It remains to be seen whether the Government's new 130% super-deduction capital allowance offer for vans and trucks, which will allow companies to cut their tax bill by up to 25p for every £1 they invest until March 31, 2023, will promote a swing back to purchase.

For now, 57% lease their electric vans, 15% buy outright and 21% use a combination of both. The rest use daily hire or hire purchase.

By far the biggest obstacle preventing faster uptake of electric vans is insufficient range for job requirements – 38% of fleets said that was their main concern. A further 14.5% said vehicle cost was a major obstacle, although on a TCO basis, smaller electric vans are competitive against diesel, despite their higher P11D price.

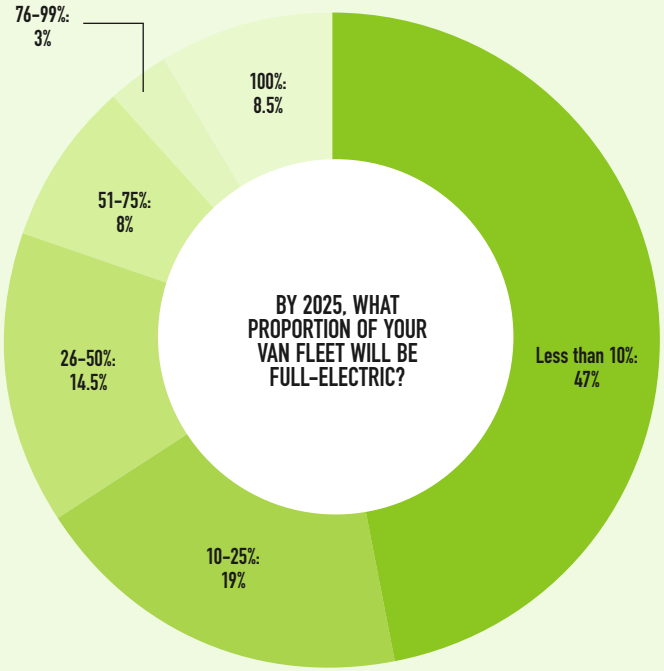
Winter says: "Even basic TCO modelling shows some positivity, particularly on fuel and SMR costs. Then there are fewer breakdowns, the cost of clean air zones and the RFL (road fund licence). But you have to look at all the data carefully."

Regarding vehicle charging, 8% of fleets said many of their drivers do not have off-road parking suitable for home chargers, while 6.5% are concerned about the cost of investment in workplace charging infrastructure. For 2%, getting buy-in at director level was hampering attempts to embrace electric.

Just more than 60% of companies have already installed chargers at offices and depots, but many have concerns about the adequacy of their network.

Almost a third (29%) do not have sufficient electric capacity from the local DNO (distribution network operator), while 27% do not have enough space to accommodate all the charging points needed to satisfy demand. A quarter have the space, but not the right locations for their chargers. Among the more minor worries are scheduling charging (11%) and the speed with which chargers are being installed falling behind demand (8%).

> "EVEN BASIC TCO MODELLING SHOWS SOME POSITIVITY, PARTICULARLY ON FUEL AND SMR"
>
> **STEVE WINTER, BRITISH GAS**



SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Adrian Brabazon, UK fleet sales manager, bp Fleet Solutions

Post-pandemic, we've seen just how quickly human behaviour can change; how we have all become more flexible and willing to adapt faster than ever before.

A recent survey carried out by Fleet News and bp, polling more than 200 fleets of different sizes and industries, has revealed that of those yet to add any electric vehicles (EVs) to their fleet, 18% have no intention to make the switch until forced to by the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles.

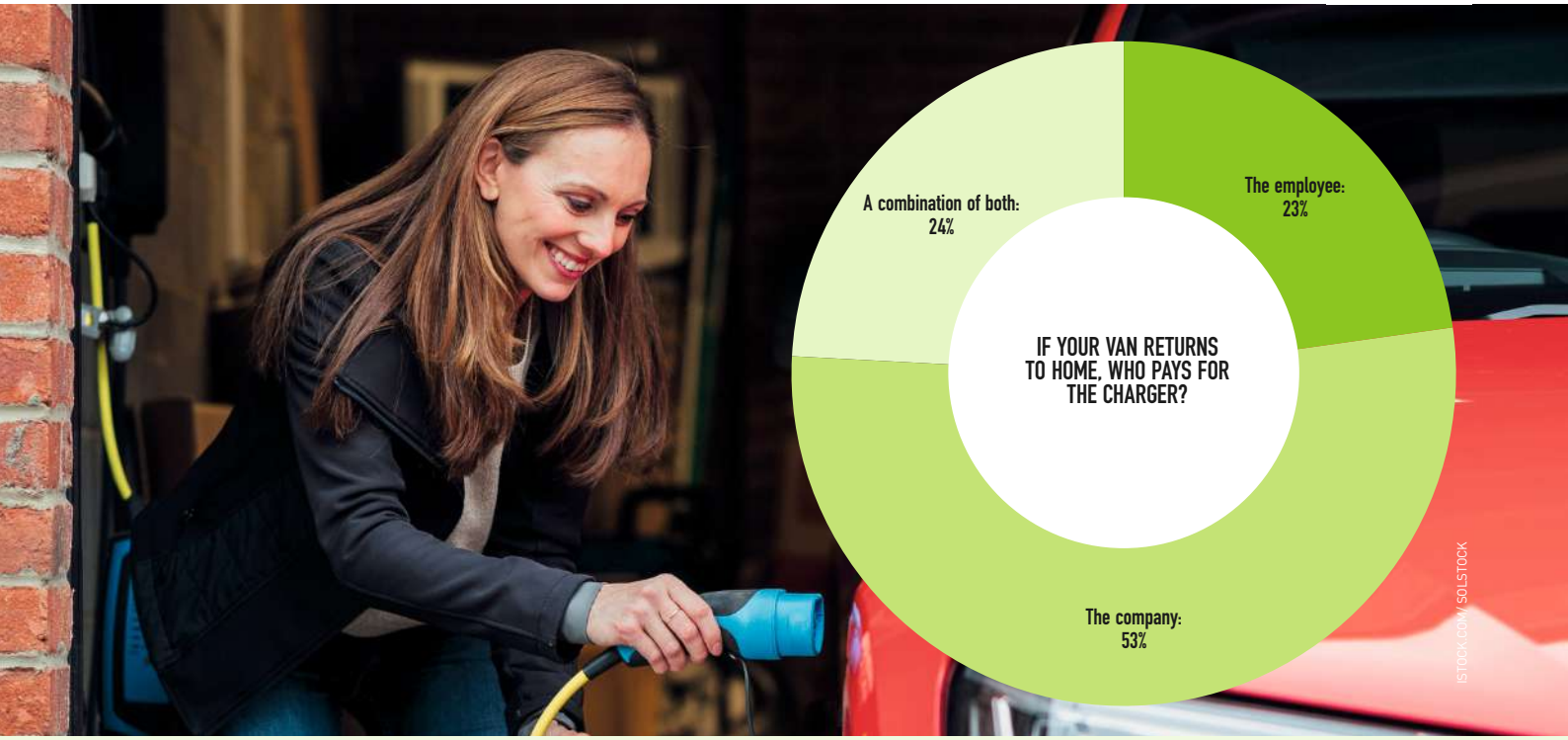
However, more than half (57%) will start adding EVs within the next two years.

This highlights how much work is still to be done in changing industry perception and instilling more confidence in fleet decision-makers to make the switch.

We want to help bring fleets into the future with our end-to-end fleet solutions, helping businesses with EV charging solutions at work and at home while providing them with access to bp pulse, the largest public network of rapid chargers in the UK.

Our Fuel and Charge card and app also makes the switch to EV simpler and more convenient for fleet decision-makers, with ongoing support across finance, charging infrastructure, invoicing and maintenance.

We know how challenging the shift can be and bp is here to help your business meet those challenges.



Many businesses have vans that both return to base and return to home. Just in excess of two-thirds (37%) have a mix, while 29% are solely return to base and 34% return to home.

Of those companies with vans that are kept at the employee's home overnight, 53% pay for their staff to have a home charger fitted, while 24% require the employee to make a contribution.

However, almost a quarter (23%) expect the employee to fund the entire cost of the home charger. Companies taking this approach often justify their position by saying that the employee will benefit from the charger for their own personal electric car, while the Government grant also covers a large proportion of the cost.

At the time of the survey in May, 8% of respondents said vehicle availability was an issue hampering uptake of electric vans; asked again now, and that proportion is likely to have increased due to the significant supply issues caused by the shortage of semiconductors.

At a recent Fleet News at 10 webinar, fleets raised concerns about the delays in van supply including electric as they geared up to meet the tightening regulations on air quality.

Lorna McAtear, National Grid fleet manager, told viewers: "This is a genuine issue, especially for vans which are the poor relation to cars. Getting supply of electric vans by those (2030 deadline) dates does make me nervous."

Fellow panellist Denise Lane, head of group fleet at Capita, added: "We've got some lead times out to March 2022 and that's supposed to be on a four-year lease for a diesel vehicle. So, we're having to re-evaluate and look at alternatives. It makes it very hard to plan ahead to 2030 – it's not acceptable to have a year delay on delivery."

Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) chair Paul Hollick pointed to the fact that the semiconductor shortage is a global issue that began in America at the start of the year.

"It's going to last at least a year, if not longer and there's a good chance that some vans could be on order for 15 months," he said. "I've never been in a situation before where, across the board, you are looking at a lead time of nine months plus.

"My concern as well is whether the lease companies can hold the residual value for that length of time between order and delivery."

Hollick predicts that this issue could be repeated in the future. "We're also going to continue to have the pinch points with rare materials that need to be sourced," he explained during the webinar.

> "GETTING SUPPLY OF ELECTRIC VANS BY THOSE (2030 DEADLINE) DATES DOES MAKE ME NERVOUS"
>
> **LORNA McATEAR, NATIONAL GRID**

Proportion of vans on order that are:

PHEV	EV
1.6%	4.3%

Supply delays could affect the rate of EV uptake, with fleets far less optimistic about adopting electric vans compared with cars.

In the first part of the Electric Fleet survey published last month, 15.5% of respondents predicted that their entire car fleet would be electric by 2025, while 39.5% expected more than half their cars to be full-electric.

Vans are a complete contrast. Just 8% of fleets forecast a complete switch to electric within the next four years, while only 19% will have converted at least half of their vans to electric.

Mitie sits in the former group, targeting a wholesale move to electric for its entire fleet by then, as part of its corporate Plan Zero strategy.

Simon King, its director of sustainability and social value, says: "More than 90% of operational emissions come from our fleet, so, to decarbonise, we had to address this. We currently have 1,200 pure electric vehicles on the road which is 16% of our fleet."

By the end of this year, that proportion is expected to rise to 25%.

At the other end of the scale are the companies that have minimal aspirations to bring EVs onto their fleet in the coming years.

Where 21.5% of fleets say fewer than 10% of their cars will be full-EV by 2025, for vans that proportion surges to 47%. In total, two-thirds say fewer than a quarter of their vans will be electric by the decade's midpoint, leaving them just five years before the Government's ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vans comes into force.

With the lengthening delays caused by global production shutdowns due to the Covid pandemic now further exacerbated by the semiconductor shortages, demand is likely to exceed supply for several years.

Businesses need to start planning their migration strategies now in order to have the necessary infrastructure and policies in place to enable a smooth transition.

The transition to EV

Decision-makers will discover there's never been a better time to switch

The industry is in a moment of significant change and, as the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles is set to be banned from 2030, the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is high on the agenda for many decision-makers.

A survey carried out in association with bp, which polled more than 200 fleets of different sizes and industries, has revealed that 7% of fleets have moved all their vehicles to electric.

However, just more than three-quarters (76%) of fleet respondents are yet to add an ultra-low emission BEV or PHEV van to their fleet. The adoption rate for electric vans is an extremely small proportion of that and lower than that for cars – currently only 1% of van drivers operate a PHEV, and 1% a BEV.

The research goes on to reveal that of those businesses yet to add any electric vehicles to their fleet, 18% have no intention to make the switch until forced to by the 2030 ban, while 57% plan to start introducing EVs within the next two years.

Of all fleets polled, 10% said many of their drivers do not have off-road parking suitable for home chargers, while 9% are concerned about the cost of investment in workplace charging infrastructure. In addition, 8% said vehicle availability was an issue and that proportion may have increased due to the supply issues caused by the shortage of semi-conductors.

This shows a lack of confidence in the ability and the reliability of EVs, as well as a lack of knowledge around charging infrastructure. But, as one of the largest EV charging suppliers in the UK, bp pulse offers business end-to-end solutions for all EV needs.

We know that the mileage van drivers need to cover can be high and journeys often include a high volume of stops for deliveries. However, drivers can be reassured that they are never far from their next charge with bp pulse, the largest public network of rapid chargers in the UK.

Not only do drivers have access to thousands of charging points, but fleets have access to an expert account manager to guide them through the process of electrifying depots, offices or homes so that they can feel confident making the changes to a fully electric fleet.

bp's Fleet Solutions also includes the Fuel and Charge card and app to support fleet vehicles of all engine types in their transition to EV. With a focus on end-to-end integration, mixed fleets have a one card solution for all charging and fueling needs.

The upfront cost of transitioning to EV can feel overwhelming, but bp supports fleets in weighing up initial costs of EVs, against long term gains including savings on tax, fuel and maintenance of a fleet.

There has never been a better time for fleet decision-makers to lead the way to an electric future, and Fuel and Charge can help fleets embrace the change as we head towards net zero.

To find out more please visit: bp.com

bp

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

October 5-6, 2021, at the NEC

Priceless insight into the hottest issues affecting fleets will be delivered at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live

The issues and long-term challenges of moving people and goods around will be addressed at this year's Fleet & Mobility Live, at the NEC Birmingham on October 5 and 6.

The event, curated for fleet decision-makers by fleet decision-makers, will identify the most pressing issues facing fleet and mobility professionals to form best practice sessions to tackle them head on.

The Fleet & Mobility Live Visitor Advisory Board (VAB) (see panel members) is made up of leading professionals in the fleet and mobility industries to ensure relevant and topical content is delivered in the event's three theatre areas: Operational Excellence, Strategy and Benefits Box.

Benefits Box is new for 2021 and is especially tailored for HR and finance executives involved in company car provision, through salary sacrifice or PCH and affinity schemes. Also new for this year is a Local Authority Hub, which will put local authority decision-makers face-to-face with their fleet constituents.

The UK business fleet programme will also recognise how companies are preparing for the business mobility as a service (MaaS) revolution and how the responsibilities of fleet decision-makers are expanding beyond automotive and will, ultimately, encompass all areas of mobility.

The role of mobility manager encompasses areas such as active travel, alternative fuels, subscription services, public transport and car/ride sharing schemes.

Core fleet principles on how to improve your car, van and truck operations will, of course, also be covered, including how to bring electric vehicles (EVs) onto your fleet policy and how to establish a workplace charging infrastructure in the build-up to the 2030 ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars and vans.

Topics covered at the show will include: transport decarbonisation and what it means for fleets, future tax predictions, driver training and risk assessment challenges brought on by Covid-19, getting the most out of telematics, driver and staff recruitment, how salary sacrifice schemes can encourage employees into EVs, alternative fuels, autonomous technology and implementing eMobility strategies, among many others.

WHICH AREAS OF BUSINESS WILL BENEFIT FROM ATTENDING?

Fleet and Transport: Learn about legislation and taxation changes, the latest cost-saving opportunities, risk analysis and management, how to adapt to new technologies, and more.

Travel and Mobility: Prepare your fleet for the business MaaS revolution. Learn how cities are changing with the adoption of mobility platforms, how connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) technology will transform the industry and how fleets are thinking beyond automotive.

Directors & Senior Management: Learn from senior peers how to lead your business forward with fleet management best practices. Get to grips with legal requirements, cost-saving opportunities, how to manage your vehicles and drivers, and more.

Procurement: Get the latest guidance on procurement skills, wholelife costs of fleet contracts and tips on managing suppliers. Learn from the experts how to drive business value with best practices in fleet purchasing and supplier management.

Finance: Learn how to manage your fleet for optimum tax planning and efficiency. Get the latest guidance on company car taxation and approaches to different vehicle funding and benefits.

HR: Learn how to improve driver well-being and better manage risk and fatigue. Get to grips with the latest legal requirements and regulations for protecting your fleet and remaining compliant.

Visitors will also have the chance to enter into high-level discussions with a full range of manufacturers, service providers and fleet suppliers to enable faster, better decision-making in managing their fleet.

All speakers will be experts in their fields, either fleet decision-makers or representatives of specialist industry bodies and organisations. There will be no sales pitches.

BIG PRAISE FROM VISITORS TO THE 2020 VIRTUAL FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

Don't just take our word about the quality of content and unique networking opportunities delivered at Fleet & Mobility Live. The 2020 show was heaped with praise on social media following last year's event, held virtually because of the pandemic.

"GREAT DAY YESTERDAY AT VIRTUAL FLEET AND MOBILITY LIVE, REALLY INTERESTING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING SEMINARS"

ALISON MORIARTY, FLEET RISK DIRECTOR AT DRIIVE

"VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE VIRTUAL FLEET AND MOBILITY LIVE EVENT. EXCELLENT CHOICE OF SUPPLIERS TO ENGAGE WITH, AND SOME REALLY CLEVER TECH TO MAKE IT AN ENJOYABLE USER EXPERIENCE, WELL DONE GUYS!"

COLIN JONES, FLEET MANAGER AT CANCER RESEARCH UK

"THOROUGHLY ENJOYING THE FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE TODAY. INTERESTING AND INSIGHTFUL DISCUSSIONS WITH VIRTUAL STANDS AND KNOWLEDGEABLE GUEST SPEAKERS"

LORNA CARPENTER, FLEET MANAGER AT WESTERN UNION

2019 images

PANEL MEMBERS

The Fleet and Mobility Live Visitor Advisory Board was created to ensure the show meets the needs of fleet decision-makers, be they fleet managers, travel/mobility managers, in procurement, finance or HR.

The panel meets every two months with the *Fleet News* team to discuss new ideas and agree on the core content driving the best practice and strategy sessions. VAB members manage fleets ranging from fewer than 100 vehicles to more than 1,000. They are:

- Amanda Bullough, EMEA benefits lead, Siemens
- Chris Connors, head of facilities & fleet, Countryside Properties (UK)
- David Taylor, reward and benefits manager, Wesleyan,
- Debbie Floyde, fleet & risk manager, Bauer Media
- Duncan Webb, head of fleet, ISS
- Fraser Crichton, corporate fleet operations manager, Dundee City Council
- Jerry Ward, manager, legal operations, John Lewis Partnership
- Lorna Carpenter, global fleet manager, Aveva
- Lorna McAtear, fleet manager, National Grid
- Peter Weston, fleet manager, Arcus
- Matthew Hammond, head of fleet, MGroup Services Plant and Fleet Solutions,
- Rory Morgan, head of logistics support, Iron Mountain
- Alison Moriarty, fleet risk director, Driive

HOW TO EXTRACT MAXIMUM VALUE FROM FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE 2021

It's the goal of Fleet & Mobility Live for every delegate to come away energised with new ideas to lay the foundations for an effective and efficient fleet operation.

LEARN: There will be sessions focusing on strategy, operational, HR and finance.

DEBATE: Each seminar will have time allocated for lively a Q&A session.

NETWORK: Fleet & Mobility Live is a great way to extend your professional network.

VISIT EXHIBITORS: Fleet & Mobility Live represents the perfect opportunity to identify those with the potential to become a supplier. It's a space where you can gain a second opinion on suppliers outside the confines of a tender process.

ASSESS SUPPLIER COMPETENCY: Expect more depth than a brochure and friendly chit-chat with potential suppliers. Assess basic levels of supplier competency and ask if they're already working with similar fleets and companies.

ADVICE: The Advice Centre, run by the VAB, is a dedicated zone for employees in every area of fleet management, from fleet departments to procurement, HR and finance to secure free advice and find solutions to pressing issues.

REVIEW: There will be a dedicated resource after the event at fleetandmobilitylive.com where every presentation made during the Strategy, Operations and Benefits Box Theatres will be made available to download and review.

Register your interest at: fleetandmobilitylive.com

For exhibitor and sponsor enquiries please contact events@fleetandmobilitylive.com

ABB UK commits to an all-electric 2025 fleet future

More than a century on, earliest adopter of electricity is still pioneering the way. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Power and automation technology group ABB is almost as old as electrification itself, with its origins dating back more than 130 years. It was founded to take advantage of a then-new technology called electricity, and has remained at the forefront of the sector ever since.

Recently this involvement includes working in the electric vehicle (EV) charging industry and some of its newest technologies include a 7.4kW Terra home electric vehicle charge point, and a 350kW high power charger.

ABB, a member of *Fleet News* sister brand Smart Transport, is also, fittingly, one of the companies in the UK leading the switch to all-electric fleets, with a commitment to completing the transition by 2025 as part of its net zero ambition.

"In the UK, our fleet covered 6.8 million business miles in 2019," says Craig Prendergast, country HR manager at ABB UK, which has 500 company cars.

"Once the transition to an all-electric fleet is completed, we estimate our overall carbon footprint could be reduced by around 20%."

These figures were confirmed in an audit for the Certified Emissions Measurement and Reduction Scheme (CEMARS), which is one of the world's first internationally-accredited greenhouse gas certification schemes.

CHALLENGING TARGETS

Annually, this checks that both a company's methodology to measure carbon emissions is accurate and the reduction targets it sets are sufficiently challenging.

"When we interrogated the data, it showed our highest carbon emission contributors were energy consumption, air travel and business mileage," says Prendergast.

"Those contribute to just over 50% of our total carbon footprint within the UK.

"One of our values, as a company, is curiosity: we like to be at the forefront of technology for our customers, so we wanted to do this for ourselves as well. We saw this as a good opportunity to explore an e-fleet within ABB UK."

The company leases its cars on four-year terms, and its first step was to carry out research with funding partner Arval UK. "They were great in terms of providing advice, data and relevant information," he adds.

"We knew we would be early adopters of the technology so it was important we teamed up with them because the landscape of EVs is changing significantly and the charging infrastructure is really developing."

ORGANIC SHIFT

It was clear from the outset that switching the entire fleet to battery electric vehicles (BEVs) overnight was neither cost-efficient or feasible, so it would have to be an "organic shift", according to Prendergast.

He adds: "Typically, our car leases run for four years and to go through the rotation to replace the fleet would take us to the beginning of 2025.

"We formulated the business case and it came with a cost – I'm not going to say it didn't – but it was a cost the organisation was prepared to invest in to achieve what we wanted in terms of improving our carbon footprint, as well as the social responsibility we have as a large employer in the UK.

"However, the additional cost was not as great as we thought it was going to be, and we are seeing the difference in wholelife cost between a BEV and ICE (internal combusion engine – petrol and diesel) vehicle narrow over our four-year terms."

ABB UK began by assembling an operational project team to engage with stakeholders, particularly the business, due to the initial higher costs of BEVs compared with equivalent diesel and petrol models.

It took into account external analysis as well as looking at what other organisations electrifying their fleets have done, and came up with a comprehensive project and implementation plan.

ABB UK also enlisted the help of its work council to win buy-in internally, while employees were consulted to ensure they were on board with the BEV policy.

Some ABB UK employees were already using BEVs and their help was enlisted to get the company's message across.

"We didn't shy away from anything because we know there are challenges with EVs,

we know there are some limitations in the technology in terms of range and range anxiety," says Prendergast.

"We did recognise the level of change management we would be taking on. To change just a vehicle is fairly linear, but this is a journey we have to take our employees on along with us.

"We ran a number of information sessions, had testimonials and videos from those early adopters, and our fleet partner Arval also did some education sessions.

"There have been some concerned employees, but, through the change management process, we've tried to address their concerns, whether it be through education or a cultural change.

"The messaging and the engagement of our employees was not just about them, but also what we stand for as an organisation and where we're going."

As well as sustainability benefits, Prendergast says the shift to BEVs will also have positive health and safety implications.

"The range of the EVs forces people to stop and have a break to charge, and that is particularly true for our sales and service personnel who are covering large mileages each year," he adds.

ABB UK has also worked with DriveTech to develop and implement a specific BEV risk management programme.

UNINTERRUPTED SERVICE

One of the key requirements of its shift to an all-electric fleet was that the transition would not affect the service it delivers.

"We have service engineers that can be on 24-hour call-out and we must not impact the customers and our ability to service them by moving to EVs," says Prendergast.

"There were a number of key mandates we set about with EVs that we couldn't compromise on and that was one of them."

Since the policy was launched around 12 months ago, employees have been able to order only BEVs, except in "extreme cases" where diesel vehicles have been allowed.

This is when an employee is not able to have a charge point installed at home and the local public charging network is insufficient.

"In these cases, the vehicle leases would take us into 2025, so still within our commitment," says Prendergast.

"We know that over the four-year term the charging infrastructure will improve, so allowing these diesel vehicles will not impact our ambition to have a full EV fleet by 2025, but will enable us to work with time."

At around the same time ABB UK was developing its BEV policy, it was launching its Terra 7.4kW home charging unit and decided it would provide and install them free at employee residences – where possible – when they take on a BEV.

"You don't buy an iPhone and expect not to have a charger. So, providing a charge point shows a responsibility from us in supporting the development of infrastructure," says Prendergast. "Our Terra units give about 30 miles of range an hour compared with the 10 miles an hour of a three-pin socket, and that makes the BEV more usable as it means we are less reliant on, I think, quite a weak public infrastructure compared with some more developed countries.

"It also helps with our branding and makes our employees proud of the product they have on the side of their house."

ABB UK has partnered with Centrica who will carry out the installation work of the Terra units, as well as offering aftersales services and infrastructure planning across the homes of ABB employees.

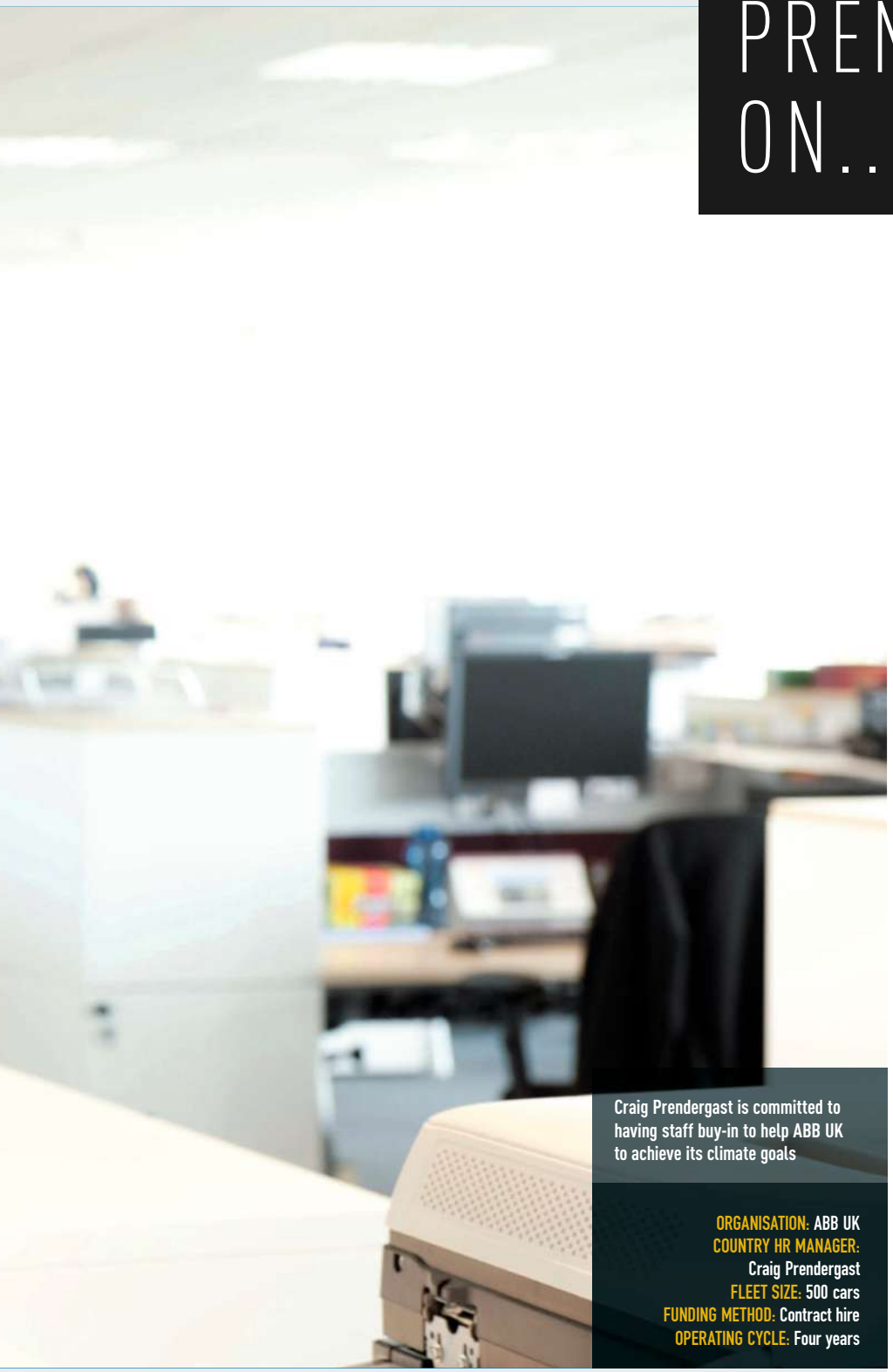
The company has so far taken on more than 80 BEVs since launching its policy and Prendergast says it is on track to meet its 2025 target.

"Coronavirus has undoubtedly had an impact in terms of vehicle supply and, more recently, the semiconductor shortage has also had an effect," he adds.

"Also, the recent change by the Government to the plug-in car grant came as a big surprise to us. This had implications in terms of the way we positioned our grade thresholds with regards to the wholelife cost of the vehicle, for example, but we've maintained our commitment to BEVs."

ABB UK also has a "handful" of commercial vehicles, and these will also be

PRENDERGAST ON...



Craig Prendergast is committed to having staff buy-in to help ABB UK to achieve its climate goals

ORGANISATION: ABB UK
COUNTRY HR MANAGER: Craig Prendergast
FLEET SIZE: 500 cars
FUNDING METHOD: Contract hire
OPERATING CYCLE: Four years

transitioned to an all-electric fleet by 2025, says Prendergast.

The work ABB UK has been undertaking is setting the global standard for the group, which operates in more than 100 countries.

"We've created a bit of momentum and the group now sees this as a natural roll-out because we've done it in the UK," he says.

The Netherlands has also implemented a similar policy, while other countries such as Germany, Sweden and Norway are going through the same process.

On World Environment Day earlier this month (June 5), ABB released a strengthened commitment to reducing carbon emissions, committing to electrify its global 10,000-vehicle fleet by 2030, sourcing 100% renewable energy and establishing new energy efficiency targets as part of its new sustainability strategy.

"The move to electric vehicles is only part of our solution as we permanently look to reduce travel and embrace the digital world," adds Prendergast.

"Coronavirus may have temporarily changed the way we work, but we can already see that our digital offerings, coupled with remote factory acceptance testing, are changing the way we interact with our customers and provide the best solutions."

... perk users

As well as job-need drivers, ABB UK also has perk users who can select either a cash allowance or a company car.

The current preferential benefit-in-kind tax rates for EVs has seen a renewed interest among employees in rejoining the company car scheme, but ABB UK is also encouraging them to buy BEVs even if they continue to take the allowance.

There are already a number of requirements for cash allowance vehicles such as age of vehicle, but imposing strict rules "becomes an interesting discussion" because the allowance is a benefit rather than a job-need car, says Prendergast.

"While we have a clear desire from a sustainability perspective, we are also a certified top employer in the UK and we have an ambition to maintain this status.

"We need to have some flexibility in our benefits to attract and retain employees. If we're very restrictive in the cars we allow, it could be restrictive in terms of attraction and retention."

Instead, Prendergast says ABB UK uses education to help staff make informed decisions about vehicle choice. It also has a two-tier cash allowance system to incentivise BEV uptake.

"We have two cash benefits," says Prendergast. "We have one for someone who privately purchases an ICE vehicle, but there is also a lifted allowance if somebody wants to buy their own EV.

"Our priority is the company fleet and the grey fleet will be something we'll work on and manage over a period of time, but I think people will start to make their own choices quite freely in that space."

> "WE NEED TO HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY IN OUR BENEFITS... IF WE'RE VERY RESTRICTIVE IN THE CARS WE ALLOW, IT COULD BE RESTRICTIVE IN TERMS OF ATTRACTION AND RETENTION"
>
> **CRAIG PRENDERGAST, ABB UK**

Nimble VWFS is 'placing its bets in the right areas'

Multi-marque business is crucial to growth aspirations, although VW brands remain the priority. *Stephen Briers* reports

Volkswagen Financial Services (VWFS) chief executive officer Mike Todd has become adept at wearing two hats. One is intrinsically linked to the electric vehicle (EV) and mobility aspirations of VW Group; the other manages the demands of multi-marque leasing as a cornerstone of its growth aspirations.

The funding and fleet management provider straddles the business and retail markets, funding 180,000 cars and 21,000 vans, of which around 40,000 are corporate.

The rest is retail contract hire via the dealer network, which includes some business leases. It also manages service contracts for around 680,000 vehicles.

A quarter of its fleet portfolio is non-Volkswagen Group vehicles, a "healthy mix within corporate", according to Todd. All retail business is own marque.

Over the past 18 months, 40% of its orders have been for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs), noticeably ahead of the FN50 average of 25% and an even more striking performance considering VW has only recently entered the electric car market. No surprise, then, that a lot of its recent corporate success has been with non-Volkswagen brands, such as Tesla.

With the introduction of the Volkswagen ID3 and ID4, and forthcoming Golf GTE, Tiguan, Touareg and Arteon PHEVs, plus corresponding launches by Audi, Škoda and Seat, the balance could tilt back. VWFS, while happy to embrace a group-level policy to conquest customers to own-marque brands, insists it will never force the market.

"We have a mantra and that's to enable the customer to make an informed decision," says Todd. "We get a customer on board and then look after them with a view to when they are renewing their vehicle, that we are the funder. And then it's how we create opportunities for our sister brands to be suitably positioned, putting propositions to the customer that look attractive and are appropriate, but always understanding their requirements.

"If they choose to stay with their existing manufacturer, then, of course, that's fine."

Across Europe, VWFS has an ambition to be the "number one fleet provider" and multi-marque will remain a "key cornerstone" to that strategy, Todd insists.

"We have become better at non-Volkswagen makes," he says. "Previously all our maintenance went through the franchised dealers, including multi-marque. So, while competitors were playing an independent card, we've played the role of a captive, when we're not."

That is now changing with independent repairers considered for non-Volkswagen Group

brands, making leases more competitive.

"We want to be a market leader regardless of the make of car and to provide all of the add-ons the top leasing companies provide," Todd adds.

The approach appears to be working. VWFS has steadily climbed the FN50 table over the past decade, increasing its risk fleet from fewer than 60,000 in 2012 to 201,000 today, making it the UK's second largest contract hire company.

Business has stalled during the Covid pandemic, with many customers taking informal contract extensions, but March witnessed its highest order take for three years.

Cars remain a stronghold; Todd recognises the sub-par performance in light commercial vehicles (LCVs) – although he prefers to describe it as "out-performing in cars" – and it's contrary to Volkswagen's strength in the van market where it trails only Ford.

"It's something we are conscious of and looking to develop. Demand for LCVs is extremely strong, but supply is a challenge," he says. "Also, the usage type is changing with the gig economy and the shift towards non-franchised delivery drivers. We are watching this trend but it's definitely a growth area for us."

VWFS is looking to expand its reach across all parts of the fleet market. Traditionally, it has competed in limited channels with true corporate the foundation of the business. It will continue to develop products and services to help increase its sales here, particularly as a sole-supply partner.

However, it is now spreading into other sectors, focusing on its competitiveness and capabilities.

Some are "tactical channels", including salary sacrifice where it has partnered with Tusker.

"One of our principles is we don't have to do everything ourselves if there are good players in the market," says Todd. "Tusker is a good example of that with salary sacrifice. It gives us a presence and allows us to test the water.

"This is a bit of an ethos for the business and we've done it elsewhere with subscriptions models and other initiatives where we've partnered to identify the potential size of the opportunity before making significant investment and commercial decisions."

VWFS has also moved into 'commit to purchase'. Todd describes it as "ground-breaking" adding: "In all my 20-odd years with the company, we've only ever ordered a car when we have a customer order. When the brands are looking to get a commitment for a volume of vehicles to help close a month or a quarter, historically we've not been there. We've watched that business go to the independent leasing companies. But we now have that capability albeit in a fledgling stage."

Commit to purchase is an outcome of a business refocus two years ago which resulted in the introduction of product teams that enable VWFS to develop and test first versions of new propositions live in the market.

It results in fewer 'big bang' launches and more phased iterations, something that Todd learned from online used car platform HeyCar (VWFS is a main investor). He was part of the feasibility group which presented the proposition to the board. It subsequently went through live customer testing and refinement to create the current business model rather than spending years in development before launch.

The new structure helps VWFS be nimble, adapting to trends more quickly or, as Todd puts it, "placing bets in the right areas".

Consequently, during the past tumultuous year, VWFS has been able to launch commit to purchase, partner with Tusker, set up payment holidays to customers, scale up its Drive retail contract hire platform and manage the significant proportion of vehicles that went on contract extension, including in the truck and bus division via MAN.

While it dialled up its launch activity in more conventional areas, VWFS temporarily pulled back from its mobility developments.

It will remain an area of priority, and one where VWFS has done a lot of work. But it's also a subject where Todd concedes he's "a lot less clear on the three-to-five-year horizon".

He adds: "For the UK, mobility is still one to be determined. We want to provide access to our vehicles in the form that a consumer wants. If you need a van for an hour, you can have one. If you need a lorry for five years, we can provide that. If you want a purchase arrangement or a pure rental, you can have that, too.

"We have a rental operation which gives us a platform for other initiatives. On subscription, we ran a pilot with Drover for 18-24 months which gave us good learnings about how much people would pay in different parts of the country, and that they were happy to do it all online. We will continue to test this.

"We also have a flexi-rent proposition for six, nine, or 12 months as a pure rental. That was particularly attractive in the light commercial sector during the lockdown."

In the retail channel, VWFS has launched mobility credits for electric vehicles. Lease an ID3, for example, but need to go on a long trip? VWFS will offer you a petrol or diesel alternative. Need to move some bulky items? A van will shortly be on its way

"While we are still trying to work out what mobility means in the future, we're not standing still. Developing our rental car and van business to use for subscription pilots, in flexi-rent and for mobility credits is giving us that rich learning and experience," Todd says.

VWFS is also considering a try-before-you-buy offer for EVs to encourage uptake, while corporate customers were enticed to switch to the ID3 by the prospect of having any early termination charges on existing leases paid, including with other contract hire companies.

"We want to play our part in the transition to electric and we are always looking at the blockers for people," Todd says. "In retail, it's cost of the vehicle, maintenance cost and residual value.

"In corporate, it could be early termination fees, so it was a tactical deployment to say we'll cover that because we are confident that when they get in the ID3 they'll want to stay with it and also, hopefully, with Volkswagen and VWFS.

"It's worth that upfront investment and it's had a really good response. I wouldn't rule out (repeating the offer) on other electric models."

> "WE WANT TO BE A MARKET LEADER REGARDLESS OF THE MAKE OF CAR AND TO PROVIDE ALL OF THE ADD-ONS THE TOP LEASING COMPANIES PROVIDE"
>
> **MIKE TODD, VOLKSWAGEN FINANCIAL SERVICES**

COMPANY: Volkswagen Financial Services
UK HEAD OFFICE: Milton Keynes
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Mike Todd
TIME IN ROLE: two years, eight months
RISK FLEET: 201,000 – 180,000 cars, 21,000 vans
CORPORATE RISK FLEET: 40,000
SERVICE CONTRACTS: 680,000 vehicles

ROUND TABLE
FleetNews

Lockdowns increase risk of drink and drug driving

Leading businesses are taking steps to identify and combat substance abuse by fleet drivers amid a surge of cases

By Jonathan Manning

Random alcohol and drug tests of company car, van and truck drivers are on the agenda of some of Britain's most safety-focused fleets as companies emerge from lockdown and staff return to the roads.

The isolation of working from home and the uncertainty of furlough have heightened anxiety levels and triggered mental health issues, leading to an increase in alcohol consumption and drug use.

A study by a team of researchers at the University of Cambridge found that 36% of individuals increased their drinking during the first lockdown, while the Global Drug Survey reported that 44% of respondents in the UK had increased their cannabis use.

Figures from road safety charity Brake reveal that driving under the influence of cannabis doubles the risk of a fatal or serious injury, while combining the influences of alcohol and cannabis increases the risk by 16 times.

Neil Greig, director of policy and research at IAM Roadsmart, told delegates at a *Fleet News* roundtable sponsored by Dräger, that referrals from courts for its drink-drive re-education course have risen from about 5,000 per month pre-pandemic to 7,000 in March.

"The numbers have gone up and up and up during lockdown," he said. "It's more about people having an alcohol problem than a drink-driving problem."

In normal circumstances, staff struggling with substance abuse and mental health troubles might be identified by colleagues and line managers, and offered support, but remote working means fewer visits to the workplace.

FEWER POLICE

In addition, austerity cutbacks to policing numbers have reduced on-road enforcement measures, potentially emboldening drivers to get behind the wheel while under the influence of drink or drugs.

This is one of the explanations for the plateau in road deaths over the past 10 years, after decades of declining numbers, explained David Davies executive director of Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS), at the roundtable which focused on driver management and road risk policies.

"Drink and drugs driving still account for a huge proportion of deaths on the road. We have 240-to-250 deaths per year where the driver is over the legal drink-drive limit. And, since new legislation in 2014-15, there has been much more awareness of drug driving," he said.

PACTS is calling for the police to step up enforcement of both offences, linked to publicity campaigns, and also sees significant opportunity for workplace action, with a number of organisations already using drug testing in the workplace more routinely, according to Davies.

"Perhaps, as police have stepped back, this has placed more responsibility onto employers to manage the situation," he said. "It needs to be taken seriously at a senior level."

Counter-intuitively, the pandemic has helped Gateshead Council's fleet to focus the attention of group directors on driver safety, thanks to the convenience of online meetings.

"We have got this group together on a monthly basis, headed up by the chief executive, and we send data from each operation and each department, stating road accidents and other driver infringements," said Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council's fleet manager.

"It's created a kind of league table among the directors. In the past, driving infringements were dealt with by supervisors or managers."

The involvement and support of directors has delivered "a real culture change" added Telfer.

Away from the boardroom, Amey provides 'reactional training' to educate drivers to the risks of drink and drug driving. Interactive sessions equip drivers with 'beer goggles' (visual impairment goggles) to simulate the diminished perception that comes from being under the influence before they undertake a series of tests and tasks.

The activity proves more effective with drivers than simply talking to them about safer driving, said Julie Davies, group fleet and plant compliance manager, Amey.

Lockdown has seen other fleets review driver handbooks and corporate policies towards drink-driving, with some businesses setting thresholds well below the national legal maximum of 35mcg of alcohol per 100ml of breath. Murphy Plant, for example, has set a maximum threshold of 13mcg, while Miele has introduced a zero limit.

"Most of the evidence is that the real level of risk between a good driver and a bad one is about 9 mcg,"

said Mark Burrup, marketing manager at Dräger, which manufactures alcohol interlocks that require a driver to pass a breathalyser test before being able to start the ignition.

It is no coincidence that the maximum alcohol threshold for commercial airline pilots is also about one quarter of the national driving limit (no more than 20mcg of alcohol per 100ml of blood, compared with 80mcg for drink-driving in England and Wales).

However, Burrup also warned that drivers being caught drink-driving are typically well over legal limits for alcohol in their breath and bloodstream.

"They ignore the limits whatever they are. Setting a zero limit (for a fleet) is not a magic button," he said.

MANUAL TRADES OFFENDERS

Paul Mountford, a road safety consultant for Merseyside Police said arrest figures for drink-driving revealed a high proportion of more manual trades, such as painters, decorators, builders, and scaffolders, "and latterly we've seen an increase in couriers and delivery drivers, too. We are reaching out to companies in some parts of Merseyside and giving free breathalysers to fleet managers to share with their drivers to provide a really simple indication of whether they are safe to drive or not in the morning".

He also advised fleets that the cleanliness of a van cab can be a sign of cannabis use; windscreens and footwells cluttered in rubbish are telltale signs of a driver who uses drugs.

While testing for alcohol and drugs after a collision is routine in many fleets, others, such as Iron Mountain and Amey, reinforce this message by commissioning third party organisations to conduct random drug tests and requiring staff to declare over-the-counter and prescription medicines that might impair their driving.

"A driver who tests positive will be suspended from driving, and when they return to driving they will be tested regularly," said Davies, adding that Amey also offers support to employees who say they want help to overcome drink or drug problems.

The challenge for fleet decision-makers is to get on the front foot and transform retrospective action, such as telematics analysis and post-crash drink and drug testing, into measures that prevent accidents occurring in the first place.

ATTENDEES

Shaun Atton, head of fleet and facilities, Auto Windscreens (12)
Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief, *Fleet News* (3)
Chris Brown, fleet manager, Denbighshire Council
Mark Burrup, regional marketing manager, Dräger (9)
David Davies, executive director, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (1)
Julie Davies, group fleet & plant compliance manager, Amey (6)
Neil Greig, director, IAM Roadsmart (8)
Denise Hawkins, UK group fleet & insurance manager, ABM (2)
Zachary Hume, fleet support manager, DPD Group
Graham Hurst, marketing manager – impairment, Dräger (4)
Robin Jeffrey, fleet manager, LQ Group
Gareth Jones, group fleet compliance manager, Speedy Services
Rory Morgan, head of logistics support, Iron Mountain
Paul Mountford, road safety consultant, Merseyside Police (11)
Tony Murphy, fleet manager, Murphy Plant
Steve Openshaw, fleet and transport manager, Eric Wright Group (5)
Sharon Rowan, road risk manager, SSE (10)
Graham Telfer, fleet manager, Gateshead Council
Mandy Vanstone, purchasing and fleet manager, Miele (7)
Amanda Wright, transport manager, Steele Group

A report published by PACTS in March came out strongly in favour of fitting vehicles with alcohol interlocks. The technology is mandatory in Finland and France for school buses, while taxis in Sweden keenly advertise the fact that the cars have interlocks. It is also used in the US, Canada and Australia as part of programmes to combat reoffending by drivers convicted of drink-driving when they regain their licences.

"We fit around 200-to-250 interlocks per year into trucks in the UK and similar numbers in Spain and Germany for companies that are wanting to look after and ensure their drivers are not over the limit. It's preventative safety," said Burrup.

Halfords invests in an electric future with more than 400 trained technicians

Halfords Autocentres provide services, maintenance and repairs (SMR) to the majority of the leasing and rental market. We help to maintain a wide variety of fleet vehicles ranging from smaller cars and hybrids to 4x4s and light commercial vehicles (LCVs), and our network of 370 garages and more than 130 Halfords mobile experts means we can offer our expertise throughout the UK.

As well as building a thriving network nationwide, we've focused on developing and enhancing the technical and diagnostic capabilities of our garages over the past several years. One of the key areas of investment has been in what we see as the future of transport – electrification – and making sure that we're well-placed to support fleet electric vehicles (EVs) going forward.

WELCOMING ELECTRIC AND HYBRID VEHICLES

EVs are a wise investment for fleet owners, as fewer moving parts means more cost-effective servicing and maintenance. In 2016, recognising that the demand for EVs across UK fleets was increasing, we began to develop the training and accreditation of our technicians to enable us to keep pace.

Today, our in-house training facilities provide level 2 and level 3 accreditations in EV/hybrid maintenance and repair. We currently have more than 400 accredited technicians and plan to double that number by the end of the year. We've embraced electrification and are well-placed to offer services that aren't usually available outside of franchised dealer networks.

We also carry out training for our customers at our training facilities, giving them the opportunity to attend a bespoke course based around the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) accreditation. This allows our customers to gain a real insight into what's involved and the differences between maintaining EV and hybrid vehicles.

ELECTRIFICATION IN THE HALFORDS FLEET

We're introducing EVs into our own fleet through a trial that's being carried out across the business and that covers both high and low mileage drivers. We also have a plan in place to increase the number of low emission vehicles in our own network and look forward to being able to share more about that soon.

OUR FLEET SERVICES

Our ability to provide SMR for fleet vehicles – both electric and internal combustion engine (ICE) – is market-leading.

SMR EXPERTISE

- **Services:** Our routine services keep your drivers and vehicles on the road wherever they are, optimising your efficiency.
- **Maintenance:** For the maintenance of items that are affected by wear and tear, such as brakes, suspension and drivetrain components, we always use manufacturer-approved parts when replacements are required.
- **Repairs:** All our repair work is guaranteed for 12 months or 12,000 miles, so you can rest assured that your fleet will be safe and secure on the roads.

NATIONWIDE NETWORK

Our network currently stands at 370 garages and more than 130 Halfords mobile expert vehicles, which means we can offer a fast, efficient and consistent service throughout the UK. This network is regularly being expanded, with the recent acquisitions of McConechy's and Universal considerably increasing our reach and capacity.

COMPETITIVE PRICING

We offer competitive pricing across all of our services and costs are always agreed upfront, so there are no surprises. A 30-day credit facility is also available, for added convenience.

FIVE-TONNE AND CLASS 7 MOT CAPACITY

In total, 189 of our 370 garages have five-tonne capacity, which means we're able to service or repair the larger types of commercial vehicles, while 82 of our locations have Class 7 MOT capability. We're continuously adapting what we offer to meet customers' needs and are looking to increase our coverage and support further as our business grows.

CAR COLLECTION AND DELIVERY

We offer collection and delivery for vehicle servicing, providing a convenient solution for customers where we can collect the vehicle from their home or workplace and deliver it back once completed.

DEDICATED FLEET TEAM

We have a dedicated fleet team, consisting of 12 account managers.

This team gives our customers a clear, single point of contact and enables them to get the support they need at any time.

We also have a fleet support team, which assists with booking and invoicing. The support and expertise of both teams help to ensure that the end-to-end process is efficient and transparent.

If you have any questions, need advice or would like to set up an account, you can contact us on **01527 868535** or by emailing **fleetsupport@halfordsautocentres.co.uk**

halfords autocentre

6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT... PAYG SMR

Pay-as-you-go service, maintenance and repair is becoming increasingly popular as fleets opt out rather than bundling it in with their vehicle leases. But what are the benefits and is it right for your fleet? *Ben Rooth* reports

Adopting the most appropriate service, maintenance and repair (SMR) option is imperative for the smooth, cost-efficient running of every fleet.

For many, a fully-maintained SMR contract from a fleet management or leasing company has been the traditional choice for both cars and light commercial vehicles.

These maintenance-inclusive leasing packages charge a regular amount per month per vehicle to cover all routine SMR costs, regardless of whether they are ever required. They also include a level of built-in contingency for any additional ad hoc work.

Typically, tyres, breakdown cover and wear and tear items are provided on a no-quibble policy basis. This arrangement continues until the end of the contract life of the vehicle.

With-maintenance packages simplify budgeting and operational procedures as they offer a no-risk package at a set price. They also remove the need to administer this process in-house.

However, critics claim they also offer less transparency and potentially higher costs if strong management controls mean a fleet requires minimal SMR.

The approach to SMR is starting to evolve. In recent years, fleets have increasingly been opting for pay-as-you-go (PAYG) models as they seek greater efficiencies and savings.

The 2020 FN50 listing of the UK's biggest funders revealed that 57% of cars and 54% of vans on lease have a with-maintenance contract. Just three years earlier, the proportions were 68% and 62% respectively.

Many fleet decision-makers assert that switching to PAYG gives them greater control, improved cashflow and more transparency and visibility over what they are paying for. But it requires robust processes and engaged drivers to ensure maintenance and repair costs don't start to creep up, and to minimise the chances of the unforeseen major expense.

Here, we explore PAYG and give reasons why fleets might consider taking this route.

1 How does pay-as-you-go maintenance work?

With pay-as-you-go, a fleet pays only for what it needs, including tyres and fast-fit items.

A fleet decision-maker can choose to administer everything in-house or outsource it to specialist fleet management providers if they feel it is a better way to utilise resources, control costs and maximise driver mobility.

These providers utilise a network of garages and repairers and also scrutinise payments to ensure they are both correct and justified. Also, they are able to apply volume discounts which, effectively, increases buying power.

In addition to being an option for organisations that lease vehicles, where it is often referred to as a 'non-maintenance' contract, many PAYG maintenance management firms also offer the same outsourced service to those who own their fleet outright.

2

Can PAYG be cost-effective?

PAYG offers the potential to save fleets thousands of pounds.

"The reliability of vehicles rolling off today's production lines has led to extended warranties and longer service intervals, making workshop appointments something of a rarity for anything other than tyre replacements during an average three-year, or 70,000-mile lease," says Jayne Pett, sales and marketing director at Fleet Operations.

"This trend is becoming all the more pronounced with the reduced maintenance requirements of electric vehicles.

"As a result, fleets, on average, can realise savings of up to 15% by opting for a PAYG maintenance model.

"For large- to medium-size fleets, this can translate to several thousands of pounds to that business's bottom line, with liquidity being retained."

According to CLM, savings of 10%-to-20% are possible by switching from fixed cost maintenance to PAYG.

This would mean, for example, that even at the lower limit of predicted savings, a 200-vehicle fleet paying an average of £40 per vehicle per month for maintenance can save nearly £30,000 over a three-year term.

Even greater savings could potentially be achieved through appointing a fleet management specialist to look after the PAYG maintenance.

"Parts and labour costs can be driven down by leveraging the buying power of a dedicated SMR partner network," Pett says.

"When looking to outsource pay-as-you-go maintenance, fleet decision-makers should ensure that a preferred SMR network is sufficiently large and robust, and that the flexibility is available to add additional repair centres of their own choice.

"This can help ensure work is carried out at the most convenient, local locations to minimise downtime."

ISTOCK.COM/OLGA KURBATOVA

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

Pete Marsden, fleet director, Halfords Autocentre

Halfords Autocentres provide efficient and cost-effective service, maintenance and repair (SMR) solutions to the fleet market across the UK.

With over 370 garages and a mobile fleet of more than 130 Halfords Mobile Expert technicians, we offer a nationwide-wide network and maintain a variety of fleet vehicles including smaller cars, hybrids, 4x4s and light commercial vehicles (LCVs).

We work closely with fleet managers to provide exactly what they need, including a 30-day credit facility, competitive pricing, free car collection and delivery, and courtesy cars. Our dedicated fleet team provides one main point of contact and comprehensive support for our customers.

Recognising the growth in electrification, we began delivering the Institute of Motor Industry (IMI) Level 2 Award in Hybrid Electric Vehicle Operation and Maintenance in 2016 to enable us to service and maintain electric vehicles (EVs) and hybrids.

We later upgraded to the Level 3 Award in Electric/Hybrid Vehicle System Repair and Replacement and now have more than 400 accredited technicians working across our network. Over the course of 2021-2022, we aim to double that number and have multiple EV-qualified technicians in every one of our autocentres.

We also help to ensure the quality of our training by working closely with industry partners such as the IMI, where we're a founding member of the IMI Techsafe working group that ensures EV technicians meet a strict set of professional standards.

For more information, contact our dedicated fleet team on **01527 868535** or by emailing **fleetsupport@halfordsautocentres.co.uk**

halfords autocentre

3

What other benefits does PAYG have?

PAYG maintenance offers visibility over all areas of spend. Consequently, there are strong opportunities for cost control and minimising vehicle off-road time.

A single, consolidated monthly bill, with all areas of spend itemised, means that decision-makers are also consistently armed with the best possible data.

This enables them to select vehicles that fulfil company requirements, but have lower maintenance costs and possess longer-lasting components when compared with rival models.

PAYG can also yield invaluable information about driver behaviour.

According to Total Motion Vehicle Management, each SMR cost and each accompanying vehicle report can be "analysed and approved with increased scrutiny".

Consequently, fleet decision-makers can monitor these trends, alert drivers when necessary and, subsequently, implement appropriate training opportunities.

Fleet Operations' Jayne Pett adds: "The visibility of SMR data adds to the wealth of actionable intelligence that a fleet management team can draw upon to tackle areas of inefficiency, improve driver safety and streamline operational performance.

"While some businesses may welcome the budgetary certainty that fixed-cost maintenance can offer, PAYG arrangements can also be accompanied by internal accrual funds to cover the cost of all maintenance eventualities that aren't covered under warranty."

4

What types of vehicles/duty cycles is PAYG better suited to?

Industry experts claim that PAYG can bring benefits and savings for a wide variety of vehicles, particularly for larger fleets.

"Whether a business is running company cars on three-year leases or light commercial vehicles (LCVs) on five-year renewals, considerable savings and benefits can be realised by opting for a PAYG maintenance arrangement," says Pett.

Steve Haigh, transport manager at asbestos removal company Rhodar, says a PAYG approach is particularly suited to fleets operating more than 25 vehicles.

"I honestly believe that PAYG is suited for any vehicle, from a 44-tonne lorry to a company car," he says. "From a best practice perspective, it simply works as it ensures that you pay for your precise requirements.

"In my opinion, there's an argument to use PAYG for any fleet of 25-plus vehicles.

"Nonetheless, if you're a one-man band and you're running a pick-up truck, then a fully maintained contract might work best for you as you know precisely where you are with costs on an annual basis."

5

How can a fleet decision-maker best manage PAYG?

PAYG maintenance contracts have to be managed to optimise their financial benefits.

The question for many fleet decision-makers is whether this can best be done in-house – with the potential for a dramatically increased administrative burden – or whether it makes more sense to outsource it.

"You need to have a supplier that you're happy to work closely with and then fully get to grips with their management software," says Haigh.

"For this reason, in my experience it can be best to work with one of the smaller PAYG suppliers where you can forge relationships with individuals to ensure the best outcome as quickly as possible.

"Consequently, it's essential when choosing a supplier that you do your homework in the first place by talking to colleagues and peers about their experiences."

Vincent St Claire, managing director of Fleet Assist, which manages a network of 5,000 garages nationwide, said it is imperative that large fleets operating nationally work with SMR providers with the right geographical spread.

"It's undoubtedly true that you need to have the resources and experience in place to manage the network and you also need to ensure you have pre-agreed terms in place with the garages and credit facilities to help keep costs under control and consistent across their network," he says.

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6

What data can be generated through PAYG and how can this be used to improve preventative maintenance/driver behaviour?

The cost transparency of PAYG maintenance enables fleets to calculate the total cost of ownership of individual vehicles or groups of vehicles.

"It's even possible to drill down to costs per vehicle, per day," says Fleet Operations' Pett.

"Furthermore, by having greater cost visibility over how employees are driving and caring for their vehicles, fleet decision-makers can address costly behaviour patterns, such as incidents of harsh braking or steering, which may be leading to excessive wear and tear.

"Specialist fleet management providers should be able to advise what the expected running costs of specific makes and models of vehicles should be if driven in an optimal manner, enabling effective benchmarking to be carried out."

Pett says for fleets looking to make the transition from internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles to electric vehicles (EVs), a PAYG model can also affirm whether comparative maintenance costs favour EV equivalents.

Rhodar's Haigh concludes: "I think it's essential to work with companies that can provide you with the bespoke data that's right for your organisation.

"For example, I recently asked our supplier to provide me with a report about our tyres – and I subsequently had one emailed to me within 20 minutes. On other occasions, I've wanted to see details about vehicles based on their registration numbers to know if I've got an issue with specific vehicles or drivers."

"And it's essential to know that your supplier will flag any exceptional events as soon as they occur."

CASE STUDY: Rhodar

Pay-as-you-go SMR is a concept Steve Haigh, transport manager at Rhodar, has been a keen exponent of for the past 25 years. He unbundled it from his current employer's lease rate around eight years ago.

"I looked at what we were paying for the fixed-cost maintenance package and quickly realised that it was working out too expensive," he says.

"That would have even been the case if, once in a blue moon, a disastrous event such as needing a new engine had been necessary. Eight years on, this approach continues to pay dividends and I can't see any reason why we'd change our approach."

The company, which specialises in asbestos removal, demolition and land remediation, has a fleet of 280 cars and vans operating nationwide.

Haigh, who has worked for Rhodar since 2010, feels fully maintained contracts are becoming "less relevant" as a direct result of warranties and the expectations surrounding the performance of vehicles.

"The reliability of modern vans and cars combined with the fact that they come with a three-year warranty ensures that you have peace of mind for that period," he says.

"So, effectively – based on a four-year lease – what most maintenance packages do is insure you against the final year, which doesn't make financial sense in my opinion.

"But you do have to work with your PAYG maintenance provider to monitor trends that are relevant for your business – and not be afraid to ask questions.

> "I'VE USED PAYG FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, AND I STILL RESOLUTELY BELIEVE THAT IT'S THE BEST OPTION"
>
> **STEVE HAIGH, RHODAR**

"It's imperative that the provider you work with accepts this approach as being in your company's best interests.

"And, by keeping a close eye on costs, it's always possible to challenge any expenses that you're not happy with for any reason should they ever arise.

"To conclude, I've used PAYG for the past 25 years, and I still resolutely believe that it's the best option."

MEET THE SUPPLIER
JAAMA

MARTIN EVANS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

CV/BIO

HOBBY: RESTORING OLD CARS, KEEPING ALPACAS
FAVOURITE MOVIE: *SLEEPERS*, BRAD PITT, ROBERT DE NIRO AND MINNIE DRIVER
DRIVES: A82 FROM GLASGOW TO INVERNESS.
PET HATE: DISCRIMINATION, EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED EQUALLY
FAVOURITE SONG: *KING OF THE MOUNTAIN* BY KATE BUSH

TELL US MORE ABOUT JAAMA...

Jaama provides fleet managers with the tools they need to effectively and efficiently manage their drivers and vehicles while providing transparency to help enable informed strategic decisions to be made.

Our innovative Key2 fleet software enables the strategic analysis of fleets with the objectives of identifying opportunities to increase efficiency, reduce operating costs while, most importantly, mitigating risk.

It actively manages, monitors and analyses data which can then be served up via tailored reports ensuring that key performance indicators are delivered to the right people precisely when they're needed.

Founded in 2004, we now work with an eclectic range of customers across both the public and private sectors.

HOW HAS JAAMA'S CULTURE ENSURED SUCCESS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

We're a privately-owned company and develop all our software in-house and I believe our customers like the fact that they are dealing with a company that's big enough to be sustainable, but small enough for them to be able to speak to the owners.

Personally, I continue to be directly involved in all aspects within Jaama on a daily basis and I make sure that customers have my contact details should they ever need to contact me in person.

In addition, we recognise that everyone who works for us has an absolutely essential part to play for the success of our business– and we've always done our best to ensure they know they're valued.

As a result, the entire team has remained focused and committed throughout the pandemic.

HOW HAVE YOU WORKED WITH YOUR CLIENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC?

A lot of our customers see us as a highly proactive and responsive extension of their organisation – and this approach has stood us in excellent stead during the Covid-19 crisis.

"Our Key2 software is designed to make our customers' lives easier"

Our Key2 software is designed to make our customers' lives easier by ensuring they have the information they need which is easily accessible.

Some of our customers have found themselves operating with a reduced headcount over the past year and our software has enabled them to adapt.

Similarly, our customer experience managers have worked closely alongside those clients who've seen demand for their products or services increase dramatically to ensure that they are getting the best from their software and the best out of their fleet.

HOW DOES JAAMA INTEND TO STAY AT THE FOREFRONT OF FLEET MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE POST-PANDEMIC?

We have a 40-strong development team who are constantly innovating to provide solutions for our customers ever-changing challenges.

Our Key2 product platform is modulised and fully scalable, which means that our customers can increase the size of their system and acquire new modules as their business evolves.

We continually invest in our products to address market changes and these improvements are available to all Key2 customers within our bi-annual service packs meaning that we don't leave any of our customers behind with outdated legacy systems.

Separately, we've recently launched our 'Maintenance Exchange' platform which allows the seamless booking, authorisation, invoicing and auditing of vehicle maintenance work. All required documentation, typically MOT certifications, vehicle inspection sheets, servicing and routine maintenance documents can be shared between maintenance providers, vehicle operators and the DVSA.

At Jaama, we're resolutely committed to ensure our customers have the best tools for their job and that they get the maximum return on their investment. And we intend to keep on achieving this by ensuring that they're consistently utilising the most appropriate and up-to-date software for their business requirements.

VOLKSWAGEN ID4

Latest addition to the ID sub-brand oozes practicality

By Andrew Ryan

The launch of the ID3 late last year marked the debut of Volkswagen's ID pure-electric sub-brand, and its line-up has just been doubled by the arrival of another model – the ID4.

As a fully-electric SUV, it straddles two of the hottest sectors of the new car market and, like the hatchback, it has cool looks, a funky interior and competitive pricing.

On top of that, as it is longer, wider and taller than its sibling, it offers greater practicality.

In isolation, these factors will be enough to win the ID4 plenty of fans, but its range of pricing means it should appeal to a broad spread of company car drivers.

The ID4's P11D price starts at £34,595 for the entry-level City Pure model (still qualifying for the Government's revised plug-in car grant), which offers a range of 213 miles rising to £49,935 for the range-topping Max Performance, which is capable of 310 miles on a full charge.

This ensures it can compete with models such as the Peugeot e-2008 and Hyundai Kona Electric at the lower end of the range, to the Ford Mustang Mach-e and Volvo XC40 Recharge P8 at the other.

We drove the limited-run 1st Edition model, and its sleek looks make it more striking in the metal than in photographs, with much more road presence than the ID3.

The interior will be familiar to anyone who has seen the ID3. It's modern to the point of minimalist, while the quality of materials and build are high.

The bulk of the ID4's functions, such as sat-nav, entertainment and driver-assist technologies, are accessed through a 10-inch infotainment touchscreen, which uses the same software as the ID3 and Golf. Highlights include Hello.ID voice control, Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

The 10-inch touchscreen controls the bulk of the ID4's functions in a minimalist interior

The driver's instrument binnacle is simple and gives you the information you need to know from a battery electric vehicle (BEV), while the gear selector is on the right hand side of the cluster.

An anti-clockwise twist puts the car into reverse, while clockwise puts the car into drive. A second clockwise twist increases the level of brake regeneration and facilitates one-pedal driving.

It's a simple and effective solution, and means the space where a traditional gear shift is usually situated can be used to increase cabin storage.

Practicality is a strong point of the ID4. There is plenty of room for front- and rear-seat passengers, and the absence of a transmission tunnel gives those in the back a little more foot room.

The boot is also a decent size at 543 litres, increasing to 1,575 when the split-fold rear seats are folded.

ID4 performs well on the safety front. It was given a maximum five-star Euro NCAP rating, with standard safety equipment across the range including a centre curtain airbag to stop passengers colliding with each other in the event of a crash, adaptive cruise control with front assist, autonomous emergency braking, driver fatigue detection and lane-keeping assist.

On the road, the rear-wheel drive ID4 offers levels of refinement and comfort you would expect from a premium SUV.

It rides well, with its suspension soaking up bumps without complaint, while there is also a nice weight and accuracy to its steering. It feels nimble and agile on the roads, much more so than its SUV appearance suggests.

It also has a tight turning circle, aided by a rear-mounted motor.

	FLEET PICK Family Pro	ENTRY LEVEL 1st edition Pure 52kWh City	RANGE-TOPPER Pro Performance Max
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£45,465	£34,595	£49,935
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0	0	0
Range (miles)	310	213	310
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£8	1%/£6	1%/£8
Annual VED	£0 then £0	£0 then £0	£0 then £0
Class 1A NIC	£63	£48	£69
Fuel cost	4.08	3.90	4.12
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	44.15ppm	33.9ppm	48.3ppm
AFR	4	4	4
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£16,126 (35%)	£13,251 (38%)	£17,276 (35%)

Go to www.fleetnews.co.uk for tax figures from April 2020-2022

RIVALS

	HYUNDAI KONA Electric Ultimate	FORD MUSTANG Mach-E 75KW	VOLVO XC40 Recharge Plus
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£37,145	£41,275	£52,895
CO_2 emissions (g/km)	0	0	0
Range (miles)	300	273	257
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	1%/£7	1%/£7	1%/£8
Annual VED	£0 then £0	£0 then £0	£0 then £0
Class 1A NIC	£51	£57	£73
Fuel cost	3.56	0	5.51
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	37.14ppm	38.39ppm	52.64ppm
AFR	4	4	4
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£12,714 (34%)	£14,115 (34%)	£18,915 (36%)

The ID4 1st Edition is fitted with a 77kWh battery and a 204PS motor. We found that under hard acceleration it does not have the instant surge offered by many BEVs, but it is still decent, ensuring progress can be swift if needed.

Our test model has an official range of 310 miles and, over our time with it, we found 260 was easily achievable without trying too hard to drive efficiently.

The 1st Edition's powertrain combination is one of three offered in the range. The model is also available with a 52kWh battery with either a 148PS or 170PS motor.

The 77kWh models feature 125kWh rapid charging capability, so can take on 248 miles of charge in just 38 minutes. It will take 11 hours to charge fully from empty using a 7kW wallbox.

The 52kWh batteries can rapid charge at 100kW, adding 137 miles of range in 30 minutes, and take nine hours to fully charge from a 7kW charge point.

Between the entry-level City and range-topping Max trim levels are Style, Life and Family equipment grades, with Volkswagen expecting the latter (£45,465 P11D) to be the most popular.

Standard equipment across the range will include two-zone air-conditioning, ambient lighting with 30 colour options, heated front seats, heated windscreen washer jets, LED head and tail lights, automatic windscreen wipers and the 10-inch infotainment touchscreen with sat-nav.

Family also features 19-inch alloy wheels, panoramic sunroof, rear tinted glass, three-zone air-conditioning, heated steering wheel, keyless entry and rear-view camera, making it a well-specified option.

Whatever trim level or powertrain option is considered, ID4 is an impressive package, ticking a lot of the boxes company car drivers seek.

It is set to find its way on to a lot of their driveways – and deservedly so.

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward

I've recently had a Seat Leon on test. It was good to drive a car that I first saw a few years back when we worked with Seat UK and Seat HQ in Martorell, near Barcelona, for a couple of years.

We were looking at the design and giving opinions, basically just sounding boards, and Seat could rely on some good Yorkshire honesty, though, similar to other manufacturers, it didn't always like what it heard.

But, as we saw the car develop in its design studio, under the bright lights, somehow it just didn't look right. In fact, I had my reservations.

However, the car I had on test looked great from every angle – even on the dullest, wettest day in Huddersfield.

Manufacturers always try to show their new cars off in what they think are perfect conditions, but, in reality, it's sometimes the worst lighting conditions, and very unreal. Maybe they should change the expensive design studios for a wet Tuesday in West Yorkshire...

The Leon I had with the 1.0-litre petrol engine was quick, quiet, had plenty of interior space, and is a handsome hatch.

Driving standards

Since life is getting back to some sort of normality I have noticed that driving standards seem to have dropped. When I'm doing the speed limit some idiot goes past me well exceeding it. Patience seems to be gone out of the window. If you take an extra second to set off from traffic lights, someone behind is pressing their horn and shaking their fist. All of a sudden, everyone seems to be in a rush.

Not-so-silent night

A friend who has just taken delivery of a new Toyota C-HR asked me to check it out, as it makes the most awful scraping noise when setting off. I thought the brakes had a fault.

I contacted a friend at Toyota Europe who told me it is the AVAS (Acoustic Vehicle Alerting System) and cannot be turned off, even at night, so you can still annoy neighbours in the small hours.

Although it is of huge benefit to have a warning system on a silent car, it is still pretty annoying, but does get noticed, and no pedestrian can now say 'I didn't hear you coming'. I'm not quite sure how this sits with the law where you can't have an audible warning, such as a horn, between the hours of 11:30pm and 7am on a road with street lights and a 30mph speed limit.

FIAT 500E

New 'leader of the pack' electric version addresses some ergonomic flaws of previous 500s

By Matt de Prez

To set the scene for the new Fiat 500e we first need to look back at the Ford Ka. Following the success of the first-generation model in the '90s, Fiat ended up working with Ford to co-develop the next one, along with its own 500 (the one we have now).

This arrangement was especially lucrative for Fiat; the poor old Ka lost its place at the top of the sales charts while the retro-styled Italian stole the nation's hearts. Such was the 500's success that Ford, eventually, pulled the plug.

What we're reviewing here, however, is an all-new, all-electric 500. Primed and ready to set the standard for the next generation of small car – sound familiar?

Before you break out the tissue box to mourn the demise of the old one, fear not. It will continue to grace the car parks of your local Starbucks "for the foreseeable future" says Fiat, with its recently introduced hybrid petrol engine.

So, what's this new 500 all about then? Well, Fiat says everything is new. That's the exterior, interior and underpinnings. However, it's not ready to abandon the design of the original, meaning the new 500 looks quite a lot like the old one.

Finally, a touchscreen from Fiat that isn't tiresome to use

It's fair to say the old 500 was somewhat ergonomically flawed, with a pretty dreadful driving position and a dashboard that was decidedly lacking in up-to-date technology.

In the 500e, it's all changed. There's a crisp digital instrument binnacle, a thoughtful design to the position of the steering wheel, seat and pedals, and a great big touchscreen that – for the first time in a Fiat – isn't a tiresome thing to use.

Prices start at a palatable £22,940 (P11D) for the basic Action model, which comes with a 24kWh battery for a range of around 115 miles.

That might not be enough for everyone, so the next model up, Passion, comes with a larger 42kWh battery and can cover up to 199 miles between charges. It costs from £26,440.

There's also an Icon (£27,940) and a fully-loaded La Prima for £29,940, plus the choice of a cabriolet. The Passion is likely to be the biggest seller.

While the smaller battery powers a 93PS electric motor, the larger unit is paired with a 118PS. We sampled the latter and it left a lasting impression.

By developing the car from the ground up to be an EV, Fiat has managed to avoid some of the packaging and driveability compromises experienced in some other cars. The result is a car that is fun, comfortable and efficient.

During our testing we saw no less than 5mi/kWh, which is impressive for any EV and means the car could, technically, exceed Fiat's range predictions if driven sensibly. Of course, that instant acceleration coupled with the 500's nimble chassis makes it challenging to do so.

The 500e isn't an all-out speedster though. It tops out at 93mph. Instead, it's exactly what you want from a city car. There's enough grunt to keep up with motorway traffic, but, in the main, it's happy nipping in and out of gaps in the city.

Cars like the 500e, Mini Electric and Honda e are a desirable and cost-effective first step into electric motoring for many. We could be looking at the new leader of the pack.

	FLEET PICK FIAT 500 PASSION 42KWH
SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£26,440
Monthly BIK (20%)	1%/£4.40
Class 1A NIC	£36
Annual VED	£0
RV (4yr/80k)	£8,835/33.4%
Fuel cost (ppm)	3.4
AFR (ppm)	4
Running cost (4yr/80k)	28.7
CO_2 (g/km)	0
Range (miles)	199

AUDI A3

40 TFSI E (204PS)

ŠKODA OCTAVIA

SE TECHNOLOGY ESTATE 1.5TSI

By Sarah Tooze

Our Audi A3 plug-in hybrid has many fine points, but boot space isn't one of them. At 280 litres with the seats up it is 100 litres smaller than the conventionally-powered A3 (380l), due to repositioning various components under the floor to make room for the battery.

While a smaller boot space is par for the course with electric vehicles (EVs), the A3's boot is still smaller than key rival the Mercedes-Benz A250e, which offers 310l (60l fewer than the conventional A-Class).

When a week's family holiday in self-catering accommodation beckoned, I was able to switch to Volkswagen Group stablemate, the Škoda Octavia estate, which we also have on test.

Both cars are based on the same platform and can be chosen with the same engines.

However, our long-term Octavia is the 1.5 TSI and not the plug-in hybrid and its boot is cavernous, offering 640l with the seats up and 1,700 with them folded. This meant it easily accommodated a week's food shopping, suitcases, pushchair, toys and all the other 'just in case' items needed for a holiday with a two-year-old.

Of course, it's unfair to compare an estate car with a hatchback, especially one that prides itself on practicality, but my situation illustrates the heart versus head scenario company car drivers can face when selecting a new model.

The A3 is sportier and more desirable than the Octavia but the latter is hard to beat when it comes to space, equipment and value for money. And, now that I'm a parent, going for the sensible option is becoming the norm.

However, there is an alternative solution. A limited number of leasing and car subscription providers will bundle two weeks' car hire into an EV contract for the occasions when you need a bigger vehicle or one with a longer range. This applies to EVs only, not PHEVs.

VW GOLF FIRST TEST

GTE 1.4 TSI PHEV

By Matt de Prez

There are more performance-focused variants of the new VW Golf than there are 'regular' ones, with various iterations of the famous GTI, joined by the range-topping R plus the GTD and GTE.

The GTE uses a new, more powerful 245PS version of VW Group's otherwise familiar 1.4-litre petrol-electric set-up. A 13kWh battery provides a zero-emission range of up to 40 miles.

It's designed to entice company car drivers with a tax-friendly combination of practicality and sportiness. From the outside, it's adorned with an aggressive body kit, enhanced by our test car's optional 18-inch alloy wheels.

The car comes with a decent level of specification, including LED matrix headlights, keyless entry and adaptive cruise control with lane-keep assist and blind spot monitoring.

Our car is also equipped with the £270 Winter Pack, which provides heated seats for all occupants and a heated steering wheel. We've also got the £300 reversing camera and, most importantly, the Dynamic Chassis Control at £715.

VOLVO XC40 FIRST TEST

T4 R DESIGN

By Mike Roberts

There's much to admire about the Volvo XC40 Recharge plug-in hybrid. Its handsome exterior, quality interior, decent spec level and hugely-impressive safety kit make it a compelling choice for user-choosers.

We're testing the T4 version, in R-Design trim, as it's expected to be the most popular with business users. It combines a 1.5-litre three-cylinder petrol engine and electric motor with a 10.6kWh battery (for a claimed range of 27 miles) and produces CO_2 emissions from 47g/km.

Prices start at £39,130 but our model's price-tag is just short of £44,500 due to a comprehensive optional extras list.

I'll cover driveability and practicality in more detail in future test reports, but passenger and luggage space in the XC40 is generous (neither is affected by the inclusion of a battery, which is cleverly packaged into the car's chassis) and ride quality is comfortable and refined.

I'm thoroughly looking forward to spending the next few months in this classy car, getting to grips with the technology it offers.

SUZUKI SWACE

HYBRID SZ5

By Jeremy Bennett

Fleets or drivers considering choosing the Swace will discover that gaining an understanding of the power sources in this hybrid estate car is of primary importance.

Because there's no requirement to plug it in (no range anxiety, no searching for charging stations) the relationship between the 1.8-petrol engine, the battery and the driver is a passive one, but an understanding of what is happening is useful to know.

Suzuki puts it this way, "the electric motor charges itself as you drive".

The electric motor starts the car and continues to be engaged at low speeds; with normal driving, including light acceleration, the engine and motor (powered by the engine via a generator) drive the vehicle.

If the battery is low, the petrol engine will charge it in normal driving. Become more aggressive, you'll use both the engine and motor, with electricity supplied to the latter via the generator and the battery. Finally, in slowing down, wheel rotation is used to generate electricity and charge the battery.

CVT automatic transmission is offered as standard. Three drive modes – normal, eco and sport – are available dependent on driving conditions or driver's preference. Combined with the battery and an adequately powered engine (102PS at 5,200 rpm; 0-62mph in 11.1 seconds) you will have a smooth, if unengaging, drive.

Suzuki points out that, as an estate car, the low centre of gravity, plus distribution of engine and battery weight, means more stability and, therefore, driver comfort on corners.

All is quiet when in electric mode, but accelerate hard and there is a rapid increase in revs – and noise – until the CVT puts the car in the appropriate gear. It's a little disconcerting next to the serenity of electric driving.

In a month with the Swace I've achieved 60.1mpg compared with the official WLTP combined figure of 64.2mpg. With our office reopening soon and the return to a 60-mile commute, I expect to improve on that in the remaining four months with the car.

SEAT LEON FIRST TEST

1.4 E-HYBRID FR

By Gareth Roberts

The latest generation Seat Leon is the first for the brand to integrate a plug-in hybrid system with mild hybrid technology.

The plug-in Leon e-Hybrid on test with *Fleet News* is in entry-level FR trim. It mates a 1.4-litre TSI petrol engine with an 85kW electric engine and a 13.1kWh lithium-ion battery pack to produce an overall output of 204PS (150kW) of power and 350Nm of torque.

It also claims to deliver up to 40 miles of pure electric driving in FR trim, putting it in a 7% benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax banding for 2021/22, with a P11D price of £32,780.

First impressions have been good; the 1.4-litre TSI unit uses its turbocharger and direct-injection technology to maximise performance and efficiency. It switches seamlessly between the different driving modes.

The battery can be fully charged in around three-and-a-half hours using a 3.6kW AC fast charger, or around six hours using a 2.2kW charger. It all combines to give emissions from 27g/km and a claimed 235.4mpg (WLTP).

MERCEDES-BENZ A250E FINAL TEST

AMG LINE PREMIUM PLUS

By Luke Neal

Sadly, after six short months, our time with the A-Class has come to an end. My return to the premium-plus model was all too short after it had been returned to me following a brief car swap with Andrew Ryan when I drove the Mazda MX-30.

The A250e's return really has highlighted to me the quality, driveability and power of the more expensive A-Class.

While I had mainly used the petrol engine during my time with the car, Andrew, who has a home charger, was able to benefit from the all-electric range (recording around 35 miles) which, had I been working in the office, would have been an advantage as I would have been able to travel to work and back on a single charge gained at the office car park.

Interestingly, while Andrew enjoyed the 'massive blue arrows' on the sat-nav screen, I found them distracting and difficult to read. Different strokes.

I have enjoyed the power and driveability, but mostly the upmarket feel of the cabin, with sports seats, customisable dash and interior lighting, high-end fabrics and piano black and aluminium detailing it's certainly a nice place to spend time.

MAZDA MX-30

145PS SPORT LUX

By Andrew Ryan

When head of production Luke Neal handed me the key to the Mazda MX-30 in a slight long-term fleet reshuffle it was accompanied with the words "I think you'll like this".

He was right. I'm a fan of cars with a bit of quirkiness about them and the fully-electric MX-30 has just about the right amount of quirk for me: not too much to make it a novelty and not too little to make it just one of the crowd.

The most obvious example of this is the rear doors. Similar to those in its 2000s' sportscar the RX-8, they open backwards and can only be used when the front doors are open.

So far it seems to be style over substance as they are less practical than traditional rear doors and they do make access to the rear seats trickier.

But the quirkiness also extends into the cabin. It shares the high quality of build and materials of other Mazda models as well as the general design ethos, but with a notable differences.

The most obvious is the cork-lining used in the storage areas around the bottom of the centre console. Seems a strange choice of material.

FORD TRANSIT

CUSTOM TRAIL 300 L1H1 DOUBLE-CAB-IN-VAN 2.0 ECOBLUE

By Trevor Gehlcken

When it comes to commercial vehicles, they don't get any slicker or smoother than the Transit Custom Trail. At an on-the-road price of £39,915, we are not exactly talking bargain basement here, but then with so much technology, bling and general goodies on offer as standard, I reckon that's a pretty good price to pay.

Where do I start? Our test model manages to look mean and moody yet smart and stylish at the same time, with its black metallic paint job, massive Ford moniker on the front and black alloys underneath. There's also a limited slip differential which means I won't get stuck in mud if I decide to go off-roading.

The cab has a quiet ambience, six comfortable leather seats and armrests galore. Meanwhile, the dash features an eight-inch screen that controls a stunning array of driver aids. After a month behind the wheel I'm still discovering new things.

At the back there's just more than three cubic metres of space, together with half height ply lining to prevent any of those dreaded dings.

The Transit Custom is as smooth to drive as any car with impressive road-holding abilities.

BMW 530E

XDRIVE M SPORT SALOON

By Stephen Briers

It's another efficiency test this month as a bank holiday weekend trip offered the first opportunity to measure the fuel consumption of the BMW 530e on an extended journey.

Previously, we've commented on the need for a journey of 10-plus miles to get the most out of the electric range; short two-to-three-mile trips rapidly drain the battery. But what about a 306-mile round trip to Gloucestershire with a full charge at the start of the journey, but no top-ups afterwards?

It sounds a recipe for disaster given all the claims about PHEVs being extremely inefficient when running solely on petrol. However, the 5 Series was a pleasant surprise.

With sat-nav engaged and Adaptive drive mode selected, which allows the car to automatically adjust accelerator sensitivity, gear shifts, steering sharpness and damper firmness based on driving and journey conditions, and the usual rules around keeping to speed limits, but not trying too hard to be ultra-efficient, the results were impressive.

Refilling at the end of the round trip produced figures of 54mpg, or with the 34 miles of electric range subtracted, 49mpg. From a 2.0-litre petrol, weighing in at 2,505kg, this is an incredible performance, putting the equivalent 2.0i Mild Hybrid 5 Series – a relative lightweight at 2,285kg – in the shade at 42.2mpg.

Used in the Adaptive/Hybrid mode, the car feeds in the electricity at optimum times – at my destination, 153 miles in, it still had six miles of electric range left on the trip computer.

I've been critical previously about plug-in hybrids; why spend almost four hours charging to get 30-plus miles of range when you can spend a couple more hours getting close to 200 miles on a full-electric.

However, the 530e is more flexible than originally thought, offering efficiency on journeys from 10 miles to 300, although peaking at around 150. I only wish I'd checked the fuel consumption at that point as the majority of the return journey was on petrol only.

Its only shortcoming is on the short trips.

MEET THE SUPPLIER
KWIK FIT

DAN JOYCE
FLEET DIRECTOR

CV/BIO

HOBBY: RUNNING, READING
FAVOURITE MOVIE: HAS TO BE *GOODFELLAS*
DRIVES: BMW 530E, WILL TRADE FOR E30 M3
PET HATE: PROCRASTINATION
FAVOURITE SONG: THE STONE ROSES – *SHE BANGS THE DRUMS*

www.kwik-fit.com/fleet

WHAT ACTIONS HAS KWIK FIT TAKEN TO ADAPT TO NEW WAYS OF WORKING DUE TO THE PANDEMIC?

We've kept calm and carried on providing the same exceptional service to fleet drivers…

At the start of the pandemic, Kwik Fit took a conscious decision to keep all of our 700 centres around the country open our intention being to keep our customers' vehicles safe on the road.

Interestingly, the way customers engage with us has evolved during the pandemic – the e-commerce side of our business encompassing our mobile fitting service has grown by 20%. We expect this figure to keep increasing.

HOW DO THESE ACTIONS SET KWIK FIT FLEET APART?

In April 2021 we celebrated our 50th anniversary, our mantra has always been that exceptional customer service underpins everything we do at Kwik Fit – and being there for our customers when they need us most will always be of paramount importance.

Our Mobile operation has reacted to increased demand by offering greater working hours per month, now at more than 30,000, with out-of-hours slots facilitated by our (seven days a week, 8am-8pm) Mobile7 service.

Similarly, we also ensured it was possible for fleets to book an MOT at one of our 540 MOT centres nationwide throughout the pandemic. Once the MOT extension ended, there was a massive pent-up demand for this service and we made even more online slots available.

In the face of tyre availability challenges, close synergy across our wider group has meant that we have maintained premium tyre availability and exceeded brand fitment obligations in an unprecedented year. Our distribution hubs and supply chain operation ensured that centres received twice daily deliveries across nearly all of the network including a Saturday service.

WHAT CHANGES IN THE FLEET MARKETPLACE DOES KWIK FIT FORESEE?

As we emerge from the pandemic, we're witnessing significant pent-up demand for tyre changes, servicing and repairs as vehicles return to the road.

We anticipate a growing demand for a digital booking experience to complement our drive-in service as customers become more discerning, consequently we expect to see increased usage of our Fleet Web Booking driver portal.

After a period of readjustment over the summer of 2021, we believe there will be lower mileages across fleets due to people taking advantage of flexible workplace options and, consequently, the terms of vehicle leases will also evolve.

WHAT ARE THE KEY FUTURE FOCUSES FOR KWIK FIT FLEET?

During the pandemic, we serviced 40% more cars than we did the previous year – we expect this figure to keep growing and we are evolving our SMR capability to meet this demand

We're just in the process of enhancing our online 'Fleet Web Bookings' portal making it even easier for fleet drivers to book tyres via centre or Mobile. This updated portal will ensure that all tyre changes automatically meet an organisation's tyre brand preference policy.

We are delighted to have launched a pilot of our ground-breaking app-based tyre subscription product, "Kwik Fit Club". Initially aimed at retail drivers, we have a B2B concept in development alongside plans to roll out the service to encompass more than tyres in the near future.

IS KWIK FIT READY TO FACE THE CHALLENGES OF EV-DOMINATED FLEETS?

EVs and hybrids are going to dominate company fleets – and we're committed to ensuring that we have the right training and knowledge in place. We've responded by ensuring that we now have more than 550 fully qualified EV technicians, who've undertaken IMI level 2 accredited training courses. This means that they can complete all the standard maintenance jobs on EVs and hybrids.

WHAT ADVICE COULD KWIK FIT GIVE TO FLEETS REGARDING TYRE CHOICE FOR EVs

It is our recommendation that EV tyres are replaced on a like-for-like basis in accordance with what the manufacturer stipulates should be fitted. This ensures the best possible battery range is maintained.

At Kwik Fit, we intend to ensure we've got both the tyres and the expertise in place to cater for this increased demand from EV fleet drivers.

CommercialFleet

Van excellence
MEDIA PARTNER
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The long haul to find enough skilled drivers

Shortage reaches crisis levels as economic recovery adds further strain

PLUS: HOW TO BE A SUPER FRIDGE HERO • LOGISTICS UK Q&A • FIRST DRIVE: VOLVO FM 330

Shortage of HGV drivers exacerbated as UK economy bounces back after lockdowns

Number of HGV tests fell 43% last year compared with 2019

By Gareth Roberts

The driver shortage is hitting crisis level in the UK, with demand increasing across supply chains as the country recovers from Covid-19.

That's according to the Road Haulage Association (RHA), which is calling on Government to urgently introduce a range of measures to help recruit and train drivers.

RHA chief executive Richard Burnett says what has been a long-standing problem has been exacerbated by the upturn in the economy.

"Increasing demand across supply chains and the reopening of non-essential retail outlets and parts of the hospitality sector is making the situation even worse," he said.

The pandemic has resulted in the loss of about 12 months of driver training and testing, while online retail averaged 28.1% of retail sales in 2020, according to Logistics UK, up from 19.2% in 2019.

Burnett continued: "The long-term ineffectiveness of apprenticeships for lorry drivers and the general hostility from authorities and Government is also unhelpful for recruiting and retaining drivers.

"We need Government to act and address the driver shortage for the industry and the drivers.

"While we welcome the increase in HGV apprenticeship funding to £7,000, this barely scratches the surface of the problem."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE

The shortage in HGV drivers is identified as one of the top challenges for the commercial fleet industry in a new report from Shell and Frost and Sullivan.

The whitepaper, Navigating Roadblocks in the Long-Haul Road Freight Industry, sheds light on the status of the industry as the world

> "WE NEED GOVERNMENT TO ACT AND ADDRESS THE DRIVER SHORTAGE FOR THE INDUSTRY AND THE DRIVERS"
>
> **RICHARD BURNETT, ROAD HAULAGE ASSOCIATION**

recovers from the pandemic.

To keep both local and global supply chains running smoothly, it says that fleet managers are tasked with performing a "daily balancing act".

Frost and Sullivan reports the value of the global road freight industry stood at $3.1 trillion (£2.2tn) in 2020, with estimates suggesting a decline of between 15% and 25%, dependent on the market, as a result of Covid-19.

However, as the economy improves, it is forecasting freight revenues will grow by an average of 4.3% annually from 2020 to 2025.

Logistics UK said the logistics sector contributes £127 billion to the UK economy and involves 205,000-plus businesses.

David Wells, chief executive of Logistics UK, says the industry has shown "exceptional resilience" throughout the pandemic.

He said: "Before the pandemic, the sector was already operating in a changing context: driver shortages; new rules because of the exit from the EU; and adapting freight to deliver a cleaner, greener future. Covid-19 has not meant these factors have gone away, but it has accelerated them and made responding to them more complex. The performance of our economy is dependent on sufficient and efficient logistics. But this is not possible without skilled staff.

"Driver vacancies and the shortage of skills to support the wider industry are the biggest challenge we currently face."

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT NEEDED

Rob Wright, executive director at Scala, a provider of management services for the supply chain and logistics sector, said ministers must provide the support the industry has been demanding for so long.

"The Government must provide monetary grants to support the industry, amend immigration policy to place drivers on the shortage occupations list and significantly increase the availability of HGV driver tests after the blockage created by the coronavirus lockdowns," he said.

"The industry's demands for support must be heard and actioned, or this crisis could get much worse."

The RHA has devised a 12-point plan for Government to address the driver shortage, with an overhaul of apprenticeships and a continued prioritisation of driving tests.

It also wants HGV drivers to be put on to the Government's Skilled Worker Shortage Occupation List along with a seasonal visa scheme for qualified drivers.

It is proposing a seasonal worker or periodic visa scheme, with qualified lorry drivers with Driver CPC and a licence that is valid to drive a lorry (C or C+E) eligible.

The trade association said it could be modelled on the Temporary Worker – Seasonal Worker visa (T5) scheme currently limited to farm workers.

However, with the EU also suffering driver shortages, the RHA acknowledges it will be no long-term panacea, but its contribution could be "significant and quick".

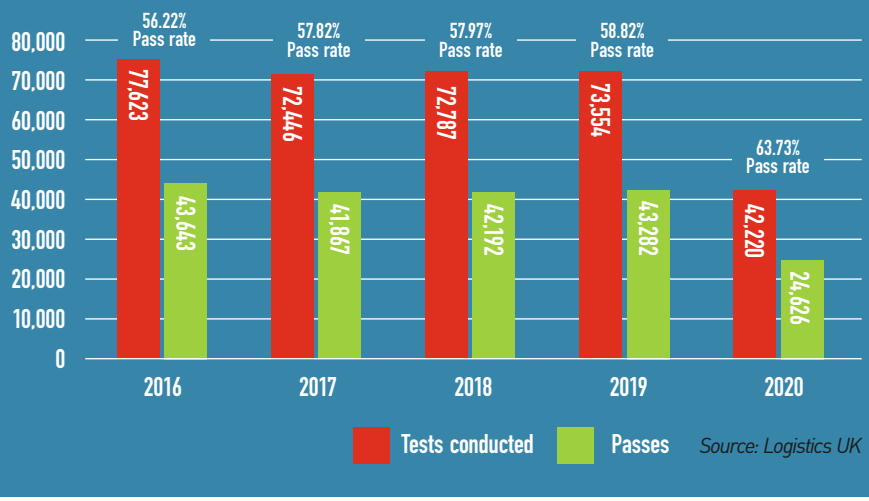
HGV TESTING TIMES

Comparing calendar years, the pass rate for HGV drivers has remained fairly consistent, averaging 57.7% from 2015-2019, according to Logistics UK.

The Logistics Report Summary 2021 suggests it is only higher in 2020 because of the very high average pass rate from April to June, averaging 79.4% and skewing the overall average higher, when testing rates collapsed.

Compared with 2019, there were 43% less tests conducted in 2020, with 35% of these conducted in the first quarter (January to March), when fewer than 15,000 tests were carried out, prior to the advent of the pandemic.

However, during the first lockdown period of April through June, only 631 tests took place. By comparison, in 2019, 18,625 tests were conducted over a similar period.



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

By Andy Picton, chief commercial vehicle editor, Glass's

Birthday treats for Fiat Ducato

Fiat has been producing commercial vehicles for well in excess of 100 years and continues to go from strength to strength. The Doblò has sold more than 1.8 million units since 2000 while the Ducato has sold 3.2 million-plus units since it came to market in 1981.

On its 40th birthday last year, the Ducato celebrated by being named the best-selling light commercial vehicle in Europe for the first time. The seventh-generation Ducato sold 147,000 units in 2020, up 8% versus 2019, with generation eight due out later this year.

Over the years, the Ducato has been the first van to:

- Feature a direct injection diesel engine
- Offer an electric large panel van
- Move the gearstick to the dashboard
- Add a CNG engine to its range
- Offer a front-wheel drive van at gross vehicle weights exceeding 3.5 tonnes

For Ducato's 40th anniversary, Fiat Professional has unveiled a full-electric version, orders for which opened on March 1. The E-Ducato has been designed and built to guarantee performance and an operating cost in line with the corresponding versions with internal combustion engines.

Each Ducato generation has introduced new features and innovations and, as a result, increased market share. With the latest generation just around the corner, more of the same will be expected.

Mercedes-Benz to offer RWD eSprinter

A myriad of new electric vans are due to be launched over the next couple of years and, added to that list, is the RWD eSprinter. Offered as a van and chassis with a gross vehicle weight of up to 4.25t, the eSprinter will be available with two wheelbase lengths and a choice of three battery capacities. It is due for launch in the second half of 2023 with a range of approximately 200 miles.

Ford to increase pick-up offering

At a time when the UK pick-up sector is shrinking, Ford is launching three new Ranger models. The Ranger Wolftrak, Ranger Stormtrak and Ranger Raptor Special Edition models will all feature the impressive 2.0-litre 213PS EcoBlue engine with a 10-speed automatic gearbox and a premium leather interior.

Glass's

Part of Autovista Group

ADVICE LINE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, Logistics UK

Q We have received a PCN (penalty charge notice) for a vehicle driving in a bus lane that dates back two months. Is this still valid – I thought the local authority only had 28 days to issue a PCN?

A Under the Bus Lane Contraventions (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2005, if the local authority has made a request to the Secretary of State within 14 days of the detection date for the supply of relevant particulars, the authority shall continue to be entitled to serve a penalty charge notice for a further of six months.

Q If one of our engineers was carrying 10 litres of petrol in a UN-approved container in the back of his van – so well below the ADR threshold – my understanding is he will still need some form of dangerous goods awareness training delivered by a competent person (either internally or externally). Is this correct?

A If the carriage of the fuel is ancillary to the engineer's main activity then he would be exempt from the ADR regulations. That said, it is always good practice to give the drivers some form of awareness training based on a risk assessment of the goods being carried.

GETTY/PHOTO.COM/FARAKOS

Driver walk around checks

The requirement to properly maintain vehicles is at the core of road transport legislation. However, the actual process of achieving this is flexible. Operators are not subject to specific rules but, instead, the process allows individual organisations to devise systems appropriate to their own operations.

Key systems areas are:

- Driver training
- Routine vehicle checks by drivers
- Defect reporting
- Defect rectification
- Auditing

DRIVER TRAINING

All drivers should be fully trained in carrying out vehicle checks and on how the defect reporting system works at their business. Before being permitted to drive the vehicles, the effectiveness of this training should be measured by way of assessment or written test. Drivers should also receive written instructions in relation to defect reporting procedures and should sign to say they have received and understood the information.

ROUTINE VEHICLE CHECKS BY DRIVERS

Checks should be carried out by all drivers upon taking over the use of any and every vehicle or trailer.

Operators should ensure that drivers have adequate facilities and light to carry out checks via the provision of torches or suitably illuminated areas on site.

DEFECT REPORTING

All drivers should be issued with a defect report pad. These pads should have serial numbers so that their issue and use can be monitored. The forms also need to be specific to the vehicle/combination to be used by the driver.

Drivers should always complete, sign and date the form, even if no defects are found. This is known as 'NIL' defect reporting and these forms may help satisfy enforcement officers that the vehicle was roadworthy when it left the depot.

DEFECT RECTIFICATION

Each site should have a nominated person responsible for making the decision as to whether a vehicle is taken off the road or not. If the nominated person decides the defect requires immediate action, the vehicle must be taken off the road until it has been rectified.

Should that nominated person decide the rectification can be deferred there ought to be a system in place to ensure it is dealt with within the required time or, at the latest, at the next safety inspection.

All defects must be rectified, and this process must be documented.

AUDITING

Operators should perform random checks to ensure drivers are carrying out routine vehicle checks. And, to ensure routine checks meet the required standard, random daily walk around check audits should also be carried out. The vehicles' regular safety inspections can also be used to highlight where driver-reportable defects have been missed.

ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/1933BKK

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.

BE A SUPER FRIDGE HERO

Fleets should embrace new technologies to reduce the harmful emissions from traditional diesel refrigeration units. Industry consultant *Norman Highnam* reports

Increasingly, we rely on the ability to control the environment around our precious goods not only to secure the perishable food chain but also to allow the transport of artworks, concert musical instruments, even Formula 1 racing tyres and, of course, Covid vaccines.

The cold chain is, as it suggests, a set of interconnecting loops that represent the different stages of the chain. This can range, for example, from the farmers' fields where the peas are picked fresh and then quickly frozen, to the Formula 1 racing team that needs assurance that its tyres has been held at above 15c to avoid devastating cold cracking of the tyre.

Each chain has its strength and weaknesses, and, with the transport refrigeration industry predicting growth year-on-year, it is important to ensure failure in the chain is not an option.

A founding rule of transport refrigeration is: 'It is only designed to hold the temperature of the product'. Confused? Let me explain.

Transport refrigeration is the leg in the cold chain: it provides the connecting part of the cold chain links.

It takes the peas that have been frozen by the farmer in the field and then packed and loaded on to the temperature-controlled vehicles which hold the peas at the temperature they have been loaded at.

The vehicles' fridges do not have the capacity to quick freeze the peas, only to hold them stable.

The doors are shut and the fridge and the van/truck it is fitted to travel on their way to the distribution warehouse.

Once there, the peas will be removed from the vehicle and held in cold storage on the site.

When the time comes for the peas to be put up for sale, the cold chain legs resume and off the peas go to store, protected by transport refrigeration. All very simple and straightforward you would think.

SOUL-SEARCHING

But, as the transport sector faces some of the biggest social and regulatory pressures since the first combustion engine hit the road, the transport refrigeration sector is also bracing itself for its own soul-searching predicaments.

The sector has seen massive changes in terms of the refrigerant gas that has been used as the cooling medium with the phasing out of the very high global warming potential gases (GWPs) called CFCs (chlorofluorocarbon – the ones that helped make the hole in the ozone layer) and the replacement of the CFCs with a range of HFCs (hydrofluorocarbon)-based gases.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Norman Highnam is a transport refrigeration consultant having spent more than 35 years in the industry, including holding senior board level appointments for more than 20 years. He is a member of the Institute of Refrigeration and a former director of the Cold Chain Federation.

But as the industry settled again, these new gases were put in the spotlight and the long-term viability of these new blends looks limited due to climate change anxieties and the gases' higher global warming potential.

Until the industry locks on to a new, low GWP gas the enforcement of the existing fluorinated F-Gas regulations will be crucial for the fight to reduce the effect of the transport refrigeration industry on the climate.

F-Gas is a set of regulatory rules to control refrigerant gas loss and ensure that only engineers who hold F-Gas qualifications can work on the transport equipment.

If you are unsure of the F-Gas regulation on your transport equipment, then talk to your transport refrigeration equipment provider.

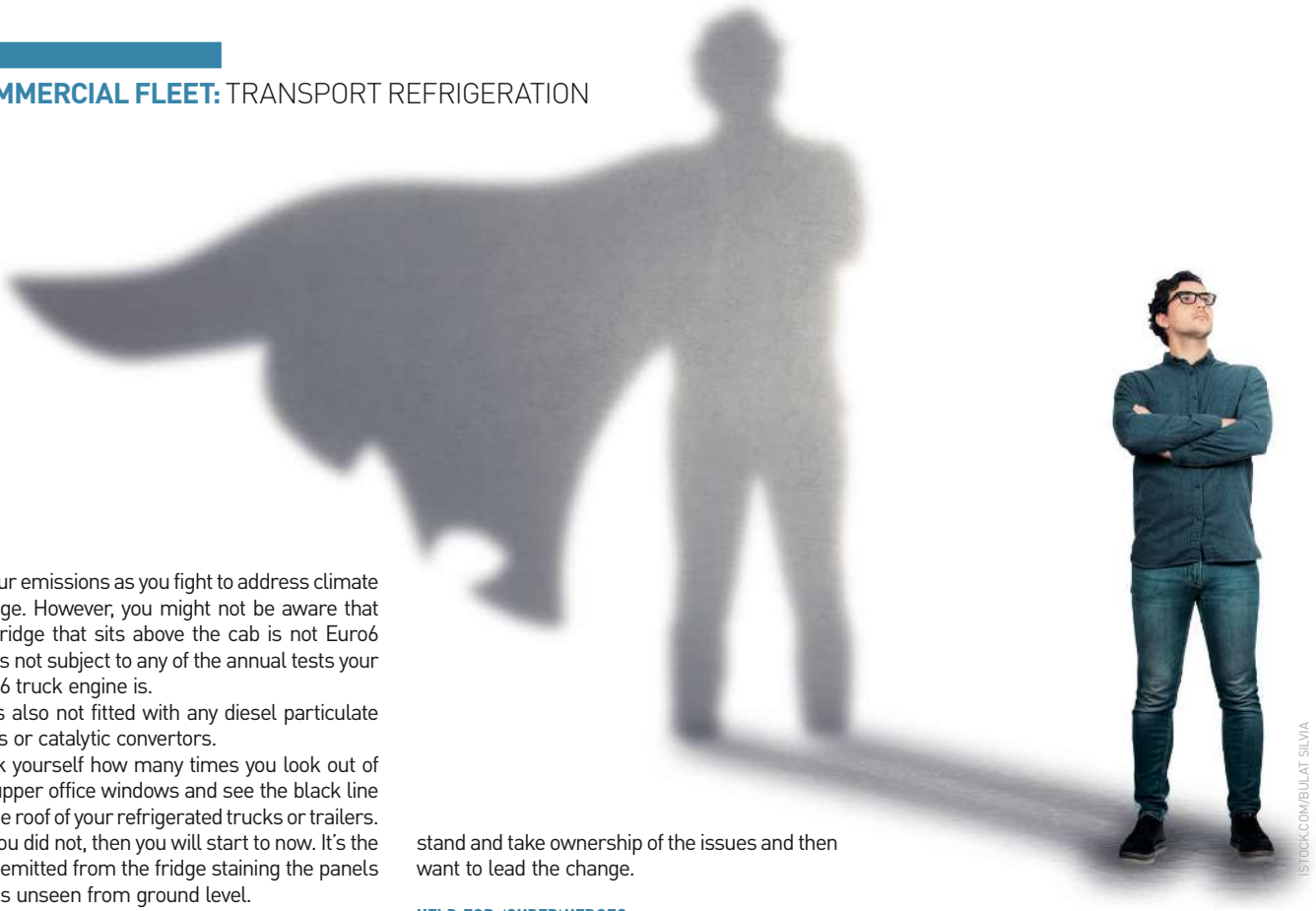
If you are UK- or EU-based, then you, as owners and/or the operators, potentially have legal obligations to fulfil as well.

Also check on the effect of Brexit on the import and export of equipment loaded with refrigeration gases and the ability of UK or EU engineers to work cross borders as the engineers will need to hold two F-Gas certificates.

While fleets may think this is the main issue, there is more to take into account.

A large majority of the trucks and trailers will be fitted with a diesel engine that comes under non-road mobile machinery regulations (NRMM).

Consider this: you might have done the right thing and invested in Euro6 trucks to control



ISTOCK.COM/BULAT SILVIA

your emissions as you fight to address climate change. However, you might not be aware that the fridge that sits above the cab is not Euro6 and is not subject to any of the annual tests your Euro6 truck engine is.

It is also not fitted with any diesel particulate filters or catalytic convertors.

Ask yourself how many times you look out of the upper office windows and see the black line on the roof of your refrigerated trucks or trailers.

If you did not, then you will start to now. It's the soot emitted from the fridge staining the panels and is unseen from ground level.

HARMFUL TO HEALTH

In places like California, it will soon be illegal to run diesel-driven transport refrigeration units fitted to trucks after extensive California Air Resources Board (CARB) air quality testing on transport refrigeration equipment found them harmful to health, to the extent that regulatory action was need.

We also need to remember that diesel fumes are a GWP gas, so we have a double emitter harmful to the atmosphere.

So what is the plan? Well, in April 2022 the UK Government will remove all subsidies for transport refrigeration equipment that runs on red diesel. It will be illegal to use red diesel in the equipment and this will be subject to tax audits.

We are seeing emerging technologies arriving that negate the need to run the diesel engines at all or to create a hybrid fridge.

We are also seeing refrigeration units with no engines at all that are 100% electric.

The technology is there across all types of vans, trucks and trailers and it takes leadership to make that one giant step.

So, are we seeing the lifting of the fog of the emissions of diesel fumes and high GWP gases from the transport refrigeration industry?

It will take like-minded people to first understand and take ownership of the issues and then want to lead the change.

HELP FOR (SUPER)HEROES

You might think the questions have all been answered and Super Fridge will save the cold chain world.

However, all superheroes have help.

There are around 100,000 transport refrigeration units in the UK and about a million in the EU.

Each fridge is pushing back the effect of the sun and/or the cold wind to maintain the optimum temperature inside the vehicles.

Each fridge is monitoring the air inside the compartment and automatically adjusting its temperature to provide cooling or heat to combat the external and sometimes internal thermal effects. The more the fridge runs, the more energy it uses and that could be electric energy or diesel fuel.

> "THE TECHNOLOGY IS THERE ACROSS ALL TYPES OF VANS, TRUCKS AND TRAILERS AND IT TAKES LEADERSHIP TO MAKE THAT ONE GIANT STEP"

Let me take you back to the humble pea.

If that pea is picked and frozen quickly to make it retain its goodness, and is then packed in thermally-efficient packaging and is then packed into thermal efficient crates ready for transit, the need for energy will reduce.

Your transport options via van or truck could be with a van or truck lined with highly-efficient panels like VIP (vacuum insulation panels) with a thermal air curtain on the doors.

When you start adding these innovations together, the high-powered transport refrigeration units can be scaled back to units that do not need diesel engines and large charges of refrigerant gases.

These will still do the job required and will do it well, as they are Super Fridge heroes.

You can then include items such as remote refrigeration monitoring to provide engineer connect artificial intelligence (AI) insight systems and then you will achieve one of the ultimate goals: a secure, energy-efficient transport refrigeration unit.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY EXISTING FLEET?

- **Get it maintained to avoid any chance of gas loss.**
- **Look to install electric standby sockets to run the transport refrigeration units in the yard or the store on electric rather than diesel.**
- **Keep the vehicles clean to help reflect the light and, thus, heat.**
- **Retrofit thermal air curtains.**
- **Make checking the door seals part of the daily checks.**
- **Start the conversation with suppliers about packaging options.**
- **Talk to your transport refrigeration equipment providers to see if there are simple software options to avoid the unit running unnecessarily.**
- **Install a connect system to avoid load and temperature outages.**
- **Train your drivers and loading yard staff in best practice.**
- **Always check the goods loaded are at the right temperature – remember the founding rule.**
- **Talk to your transport refrigeration engineers and ask their opinion on ways to reduce the double emission footprint.**

Reflex Renewable Drive fuels transition to green fleet future

Fleet managers are receiving vital hands-on experience of zero-emission vehicles to help them plan plug-in strategy

Fleet managers throughout the country are improving their knowledge of electric vehicles (EVs) through hands-on experience as part of the Reflex Vehicle Hire Renewable Drive programme.

Managers with responsibility for thousands of vehicles have already taken part in the initiative, which is designed to support the green fleet transition ahead of the Government's proposed 2030 ban on the sale of new vehicles that are solely powered by internal combustion engines.

Vehicles tested as part of the programme represent the entire spectrum of the plug-in market, from vans to cars, covering everything from the Tesla Model 3 to the Renault Twizy.

Fleet managers need hands-on experience so they can brief drivers and senior managers on the pros and cons of EVs while also assessing areas requiring investment, such as driver training.

Lisa Spong, Reflex Vehicle Hire sales director, said: "Reflex Vehicle Hire is working in partnership with fleet managers to support them through one of the biggest changes the industry has ever faced."

To request a road test as part of the Reflex Vehicle Hire Renewable Drive programme, email sales@reflexvehiclehire.com

Customer case study

Range, recharging and payload in focus during hands-on test

Name: **Shaun Atton**
Role: **Head of fleet and facilities**
Company: **Auto Windscreens**
Fleet size: **359 (49 cars/310 LCVs)**

Fleet managers gain valuable hands-on experience from the Reflex Renewable Drive programme and the initiative also provides valuable feedback for manufacturers.

Shaun Atton, the award-winning head of fleet and facilities for Auto Windscreens, carried out a recent EV assessment and identified three areas of focus – range, recharging and payload.

The company operates a fleet of 359 vehicles, of which 310 are diesel vans.

The fleet covers all areas of the country, carrying substantial payloads, so range and space are critical.

Vehicles must be able to carry windscreens and equipment, including a canopy to protect customer vehicles during windscreen replacement work.

Public recharging infrastructure is also key, as engineers take vans home at the end of the day; company analysis has shown only two-thirds of drivers could recharge on a driveway.

Shaun said: "As it stands, there is nothing available with the features we would require, especially in terms of real-world performance."

His recent test of a Mercedes-Benz eSprinter through Reflex Renewable Drive found it wasn't suitable, but it has provided valuable insight for future developments and Shaun continues to drive the company's carbon-neutral programme.

Reflex Vehicle Hire will be on hand to provide support and advice where required as the fleet progresses on its electrification journey.

Shaun added: "All the signs are that, with the speed of development, by 2030 we should be able to have fully electric vehicles on the fleet."

Preparing for an electric fleet, EV charging points have been installed within the Auto Windscreens network and hybrid and fully electric cars are being introduced.

Visit www.reflexvehiclehire.com for more information about our flexible fleet service and green vehicle programmes

Reflex Vehicle Hire

VERDICT
A comfortable workhorse that's clearly built to last, the FM 18-tonner looks well-nigh ideal for use on short- to medium-haul routes. With ample power and torque for this sort of application, it's completely on top of the job.

VOLVO FM 330

This workhorse 18-tonner has pulling power in every sense

By John Lewis

Whenever a truck manufacturer launches a suite of new models, the focus is, understandably, on the top-of-the-range 6x2 44-tonne tractor units.

A FH16 750 with a Globetrotter XL cab is always going to generate more excitement than the humbler offerings in the line-up, even though the sales it produces may be comparatively modest. It is the halo effect that counts.

That is a pity because unglamorous workhorses, such as the latest FM 18-tonner, are the mainstays of fleets up and down the country. Trundling up and down A and B roads collecting and delivering palletised loads or dropping off chilled and frozen food to supermarkets, they perform an invaluable service – and typically keep on doing so with the same fleet for years.

The FM designation encompasses tractor units and multi-wheel rigids as well as 4x2 18-tonne chassis, with day, sleeper, crew and Globetrotter high-roof sleeper cabs.

	VOLVO FM 330 4X2 DAY CAB RIGID 18 TONNES
SPECIFICATIONS	
On sale	September 2020
Engine	10.8 litre diesel
Power (PS)	330
Torque (Nm)	1,600
Payload (kg)	8,000

Two diesel engines are on offer. The D11 delivers power outputs from 330PS to 460PS while the D13 pumps out from 420PS to 500PS.

Mention should also be made of the LNG (liquefied natural gas) G13C engine at 420PS and 460PS. Volvo has additionally developed an electric model with either a 330kW or 490kW motor.

The FM day cab 18-tonner we tested was powered by the D11 engine at 330PS married to an I-Shift 12-speed automated gearbox. A Lawrence David curtainsider body was mounted on its medium-height 6,000mm-wheelbase chassis.

Eighteen-tonners tend to be used on multi-drop work, with drivers hopping in and out of the cab all the time. Getting behind FM's wheel does not involve a steep climb – a couple of steps and you are there – and you can adjust its position by depressing a small pedal to the right of the steering column.

The low-slung cab plus cameras covering any blind spots should make it easy to spot vulnerable road users.

And you can add to these visibility aids a window in the lower section of the passenger door.

Side skirts were fitted to our test truck to aid aerodynamics and to ensure that wayward cyclists don't end up underneath the chassis.

The drawback is that they could incur potentially-expensive damage if they end up clouting kerbs during tight urban manoeuvres.

I-Shift employs dashboard-mounted buttons designed to minimise any risk that the driver will attempt to over-ride Volvo's carefully-crafted gear-changing strategy.

Why would anybody want to anyway?

Upon releasing the electronic parking brake, using the dashboard switch, and moving away, the box began slipping smoothly from one set of gears to the next. It funnelled just the right amount of torque into play as the Volvo proceeded to tackle a series of demanding inclines.

The pulling power delivered and the uphill progress was impressive bearing in mind the FM was fully-laden. The performance was just as accomplished when descending to a flat section of highway, with the maximum legal speed for a truck easily maintained.

There is always the danger that a fully-laden commercial vehicle will start to run away with you as you head down a steep slope.

The FM has descent control, however. Push a button on the steering wheel, and your progress is slowed automatically, just so long as you have the discipline to trust the technology and keep your feet off the brake and the accelerator.

Touch either and descent control is cancelled; and you start rolling forwards more quickly than is comfortable or safe until it is re-engaged.

THE LAST WORD

JOE MASTERS

TRANSPORT MANAGER, METWORKS

Masters is passionate about improving road safety to the extent that, given the opportunity, he would ban all privately-owned vehicles from roads at least one day per week – including EVs

The song I would have on my driving playlist? This is a difficult one because I wouldn't have anything too fast or too slow, the mood has to be right to drive safely. I'd say *"Ain't No Love in the Heart of the City"* (Bobby Bland).

A book that I would recommend others read is The Highway Code.

If money were no object I would put all my efforts into raising awareness of road/driver safety especially for businesses who drive for work and also in schools. The work the 'Brake' charity does for this cause is fantastic.

My pet hate is a lack of manners. There's no time in my life for rude people.

My first memory associated with a car is my grandfather's red Nissan Sunny, it was always pristine and the colour never faded.

My favourite movie quote is "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it" (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*).

My hobbies and interests are walking my dogs and biking. Anything where I can be outdoors and embrace nature, really.

If I were transport minister for the day I would invest more into public transport and impose a ban on privately-owned vehicles on the roads at least once a week, regardless of whether the vehicle is electric or not. Yes, EV is environmentally friendly. However, it's still a risk just being on the road.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is go and search for opportunities as they are few and far between. Be determined to reach your ultimate goal and never let rejection hold you back. There are plenty of things I regret not doing as a younger person.

Why fleet

It was never planned, I was offered an opportunity which I grabbed with both hands 10 years ago and I've never looked back since.

How I got here

Hard work, determination and many mistakes (and lessons) learned along the way!

Latest products, developments and achievements

UK Fleet Champions awards 2020, Company driver safety award (Winner)
UK Fleet Champions awards 2020, Safe vehicles award (Highly commended)
Logistics UK, Van Operator of the year 2020 (Shortlisted)
The nominations and awards have led to various invitations to speak as part of webinars and be guest speaker at Fleet & Mobility Live and Logistics UK.

My company in three words

Social, housing, maintenance

Career influence

Influences are knowing I can make a difference and sharing the importance of driver risk. When I see cultures and awareness improvement this is my influence and drive (pardon the pun).

What makes a good manager?

An individual with great leadership skills, who is open to opinions and who is approachable.

Advice to fleet newcomers

Don't be disheartened by making mistakes, sometimes this is the best way to learn valuable lessons. Also, do plenty of research on alternative fuelled vehicles, it's the future whether you are with it or against it.

If I wasn't in fleet

I'd like to own a chain of microbreweries. I know it's very different, but I love a good craft or real ale. I love the science behind it too.

Next issue: Angela Montacute, managing director at Digital Innk

The all-electric ID.3. It comes at little cost to you, or the planet

With an exceptionally low BIK rate of 1%, the acceleration you only get from electric and a range of up to 336 miles (WLTP),* the ID.3 is fun, but not frivolous.

To arrange a demonstration and find out more, contact the Volkswagen Business Centre on 08000 093 397.

*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.