

FleetNews

May 28 2020 £6.00

INCORPORATING
CommercialFleet

thank you!



On the frontline

Hear from the fleet managers and key workers who stepped up during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to save lives and keep the country running



International Truck of the Year 2020. The new Actros.

We're proud that the new Actros has won the "International Truck of the Year 2020" accolade and would like to extend our thanks to all of our customers for their many years of loyalty! Everyone talks, one delivers. The new Actros.



For more information
scan the QR code.

Mercedes-Benz
Trucks you can trust



CONTENTS

NEWS AND OPINION

- 4 Optimism in used car market
- 8 No let-up in diesel's demise
- 10 'Send keys back' advice criticised
- 12 Keeping the air clear after Covid-19
- 14 Your letters
- 90 Last word: Ian Leonard, Yodel

TOMORROW'S FLEET

- 16 **Target 2050**
Delivering net zero emissions

ELECTRIC FLEET

- 22 **ULEV Project**
Results of Nottingham experiment
- 27 **Post Covid-19**
Getting the post-lockdown right

FRONTLINE FLEETS

- 28 **Keeping essential services going**
We talk to the fleets and key workers who stepped up during Covid-19 to save lives and keep the country running

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- 52 **Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service/Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service**
Services discover that working as one is better than two
- 56 **Award-winning Škoda Superb**
High hopes for first plug-in hybrid

TODAY'S FLEET: POST COVID-19

- 60 **Coronavirus webinar**
Expert panel answers all your 'what happens next?' questions
- 62 **Negotiating**
The 'why' not just the 'what'
- 64 **Finance and loans**
Coronavirus cash options for business
- 66 **Fleet News Debates**
Roundtable talk focuses on EVs



'TESTED TO OUR LIMITS'
P28

IMPROVED AIR THANKS TO COVID-19
P27



IGNITION

- 68 **Ford Kuga**
Third generation model shapes up
- 70 **Audi A8L**
PHEV gives A8L an advantage
- 72 **Our test fleet**

COMMERCIAL FLEET

- 76 **Forgotten lockdown 'knights'**
- 78 **Daf Trucks**
MD Laurence Drake interviewed
- 80 **In-cab cameras**
Putting blame where it belongs
- 84 **FTA advice**
Your questions answered
- 86 **Maxus Deliver 9**
In pursuit of NCAP's five-stars
- 88 **Toyota Proace City**
Standard of equipment has appeal
- 89 **Daf CF 8X4**
Winner in construction world

Used car market to avoid double digit decline in RVs seen during the banking crisis

Cause for optimism as market downturn is not linked to a lack of financing or lack of demand

By Gareth Roberts

Fleets are being urged to stagger vehicle returns to help lessen the impact of coronavirus on used car values, while dealers are being warned not to cut new car prices.

Not since the banking crisis of 2008/09 have the new and used car markets faced such an economic shock.

Back then, it resulted in residual values (RVs) falling 30% in the space of a year and put some leasing companies that lacked financial strength out of business.

Exiting the current economic crisis could take time, with the Glass's UK editorial team suggesting a 75% probability of a 'deep recession, slow recovery' scenario in the UK.

Anthony Machin, head of content and product at Glass's, said: "Forecasts suggest that UK Government borrowing is likely to reach £180 billion (7% of GDP) in the current 2020/21 financial year. However, to kick-start the economy, it is likely even more Government support will be needed."

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has also acknowledged that, despite his initial optimistic outlook, an immediate "bounceback" for the economy does not now look obvious, once lockdown restrictions are eased.

Last week, he told the Lords economic affairs committee that figures from countries where restrictions were being lifted, suggested a full recovery could take time.

That will impact purchasing power and private demand, but analysts are not predicating the double-digit falls RVs saw in the last downturn.

In fact, Autovista suggests the UK could fare better than many of its European neighbours, despite a potentially bleaker economic backdrop, exacerbated by Brexit.

RV IMPACT

By the end of 2022, Autovista is predicting UK used car prices will have fully recovered to levels above those achieved in March, when the lockdown was introduced.

The UK is the only country in Europe, out of the 13 it assessed, where RVs are expected to show an increase on March 2020 values.

It is forecasting an initial 0.4% reduction on values realised in March by December of this year. A year later (December 2021), it expects RVs to be 1.3% down on the same March values, before finally recovering to a positive position in December 2022, 0.9% above pre-pandemic prices.

In comparison, over the next six months, RVs in Spain and Germany are predicted to fall by 5.4% and 2.2% respectively, on values seen in March.

Analysts expect them to recover by December 2022, but still to be below those achieved immediately before the crisis began, with Spain showing a 3.7% fall and Germany a 1.7% reduction on pre-pandemic prices.

France, meanwhile, is expected to see the greatest decline in RVs by December 2022, according to Autovista's latest data, with a 5.3% fall.

The main reason for the UK's positive outlook, it says, is the limited elasticity in the market, together with the fact that supply of new cars has drastically reduced and is unlikely to ramp up again soon.

EARLY INDICATIONS

Pricing experts at Cap HPI are also predicting a fall, not a crash, in used car values over the next 12 months, with no significant long-term impact on RVs (see opinion, page 6).

From the start of the lockdown, Cap HPI said it would analyse both used car retail and wholesale data, but it would not adjust used values while there was insufficient data to portray the market accurately.

Its most recent monthly report, based on data for March, showed an average drop of 2.2% (£275) at the three-year, 60,000-mile point, the majority of which happened in the final 10 days of valuing. For newer used cars, the drop was 1.8% (£425) at the one-year, 20,000-mile point.

As the number of used cars being sold at auction begins to increase, the initial impact of Covid-19 on RVs will become a little clearer, with Cap HPI again starting to adjust pricing data to reflect sold prices.

Early indications from the vehicles that have

been sold suggest a 2-5% downward movement on some models. It is worth noting, however, that the previous five years have seen an average drop of 4% during April and May at the five-year-old age point, and last year there was a 6.3% fall.

The movements seen in the middle of this pandemic are, therefore, by no means seismic, says Cap HPI.

Autovista Group chief economist, Christof Engelskirchen, explained: "Governments have taken much stronger policy actions against the collapsing demand."

"The current economic shock is not paired with a lack of financing opportunity and, after the peak of the crisis, we would hope to see some pent-up demand as private consumers will regard the shock as temporary."

Pricing data analysts at Indicata, part of the Autorola Group, say Austria and Germany have returned to 80% and 90% respectively, of their pre-lockdown levels of used car sales within just a few weeks, while the Netherlands and Sweden have also seen a spike in activity.

"Denmark has actually seen a 2% rise in used car sales which, hopefully, bodes well for the UK market when it opens for business," said Jon Mitchell, group sales director at Autorola UK.

Sweden was the most relaxed lockdown country in Europe and has continued to trade at 80% of its usual sales levels during March and April. Dealers there have adjusted prices downwards by 4.4% since February.

"This is the only major price trend we have seen across Europe that gives a feel of how prices are moving. Most lockdown countries haven't repriced stock yet as they have not been trading," said Mitchell.

PROTECTING RVs

Both Cap HPI and Autovista say the fleet and leasing industry can help



“WE EXPECT THE
VALUES TO BE VOLATILE
IN THE SHORT TERM”

PHILIP NORTHARD, COX AUTOMOTIVE



mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on RVs.

Cap HPI is urging fleets to stagger vehicle returns into the used market over the next few months to avoid accelerating a fall in used values.

Equally concerning, says Autovista, would be the temptation of dealers to heavily discount models in an effort to drive the new car market.

Autovista says stock had been building up in many markets due to short-term registrations towards the end of last year, in part to avoid those vehicles being accounted for in CO₂ emission calculations and resultant fines.

Spring is usually when car dealers do a lot of business, but this has been lost because of the lockdown.

To compensate for their losses, Autovista believes dealers could offer "straightforward" discounts to attract used car buyers to new product.

However, it stresses that this would be a mistake, as it would put downward pressure on vehicle prices – new and used – for the remainder of the year.

NEW 'NORMAL'

Car dealerships are due to open their doors on June 1, while remarketing companies have been selling an increasing number of vehicles online.

BCA says a growing programme of virtual sales are being held daily to cater for buyers who prefer to join live bidding in real-time.

It has continued trading throughout the lockdown, achieving 100.2% of pre-sale valuations during the first weeks of the Covid-19 lockdown in virtual sales held by the vehicle auction company.

Like BCA, Aston Barclay has remained operational, selling vehicles through its digital channels, with an auctioneer and all the support staff safe in their homes.

Sales have been split between fleet and dealer stock and it has sold more than a thousand used cars in the first seven weeks of lockdown.

Neil Hodson, Aston Barclay Group CEO, told *Fleet News*: "It's difficult to say if prices will be impacted. It may take until the end of June and into July before we see prices settle down, although if new cars are in short supply, and consumers start to use the money they were going to invest in summer holidays to buy a used car, we may see prices remain strong."

Manheim, part of Cox Automotive, re-started its auction programme

online from May 12, with stock available to buy through 'buy now' events and 'virtual auctions' via Simulcast.

Philip Nothard, customer insight and strategy director at Cox Automotive, told *Fleet News* that, although volumes remain low in comparison with normal trading, early indications are there is an "encouraging" appetite for used cars.

Pre-pandemic, Cox Automotive was forecasting 7.99 million used car transactions during 2020, but in the 'W-shaped' recovery, it now expects volumes to fall by 19% to 6.4 million in the year.

In Q1 of 2020, figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) show the UK used car market fell 8.3% to 1.8 million transactions.

Northard's view of RV performance mirrors that of the valuation guides. "We expect the values to be volatile in the short term due to a variance of those experiencing cashflow challenges and those holding strong in the market," he said.

However, he expects this to "wash

through" as volumes and demand align, and restrictions begin to be lifted.

Alex Wright, managing director of Shoreham Vehicle Auctions (SVA), also expects the used market to bounce back. "I believe the post lockdown market will see prices stabilise after a month or two and then go through the roof supported by strong demand, particularly in the £6,000-£12,000 price band," he said.

Leasing companies are taking a similar view, while stressing any predictions are fraught with danger in such unprecedented times.

With so many unknown variables, Jon Lawes, managing director of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, said: "The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on residual values will be difficult to predict across all fuel types dependent on the vehicle and overall market recovery.

Nick Hardy, sales and marketing director at Ogilvie Fleet, added: "The fact is we just don't know yet how strong that used car market may or may not be."

For more on how remarketing companies are turning to online auctions, visit www.fleetnews.co.uk/digital-auctions

Managing supply is key to used values



ANDREW MEE,
HEAD OF FORECAST
UK AT CAP HPI

As the lockdown unwinds and the nation starts to return to work, Cap HPI predicts a fall in car values for about a year, but certainly not a crash in values such as we saw in 2008.

It will be important that, as far as possible, fleets try to stagger their returns into the used market, especially in the early weeks and months, to avoid accelerating a fall in values and distressing the market.

In the short- to medium-term, for at least 12 months after the car market starts to operate again, residual values (RVs) will come under pressure as the volume of supply from previous years registrations will outweigh used buyer demand.

Consumer confidence will be hit by the inevitable impact of an economic recession and higher unemployment.

During this period, smaller, cheaper cars will be likely to be less affected, as they will be the preferred choice for budget-conscious buyers.

In the longer term, RVs will recover as the economy and consumer confidence improves, and as used car supply reduces as a result of the drop in new car registration in 2020 and probably also into 2021.

For some car sectors, this could result in slightly higher values in around three years than had the pandemic not occurred, before values then return to more normal levels as used supply starts to build back up.

For commercial vehicles, March was the turning point for both the volume of wholesale light commercial vehicles (LCVs) being sold and also the reduced performance against published guide values.

However, a 95% reduction in volumes of used commercials available and the age profile of the stock has resulted in maintaining the performance of the sold units.

The industry will change and have to adapt to the new ways of doing things, and for the LCV world, this could provide a positive outlet for both used and the fewer new vehicles that will become available.

As the economy gets back on its feet, the commercial vehicle industry will be vital to the recovery, whether it is delivering groceries or serving the construction industry.

In both the car and commercial markets, we expect a more volatile market for the rest of 2020 and the first half of 2021, but with no significant long-term impact on values.

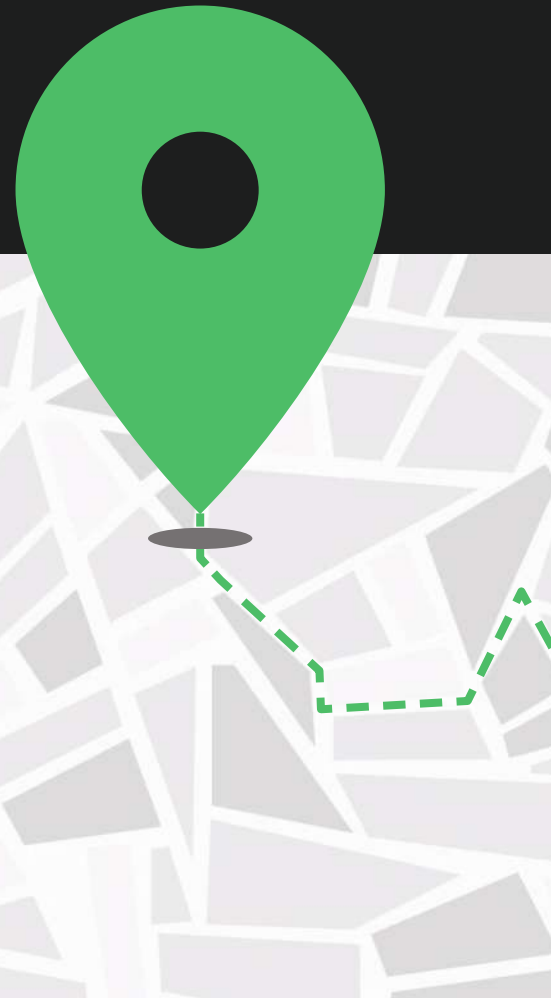
Fleet managers should monitor both current and forecast values for a rounded view of the market.



Vehicle tracking that works for you

- Cut fuel consumption by up to 25%
- Reduce vehicle idling by up to 30%
- Improve productivity by up to 15%

**We're here
for you!
3 months
on us**

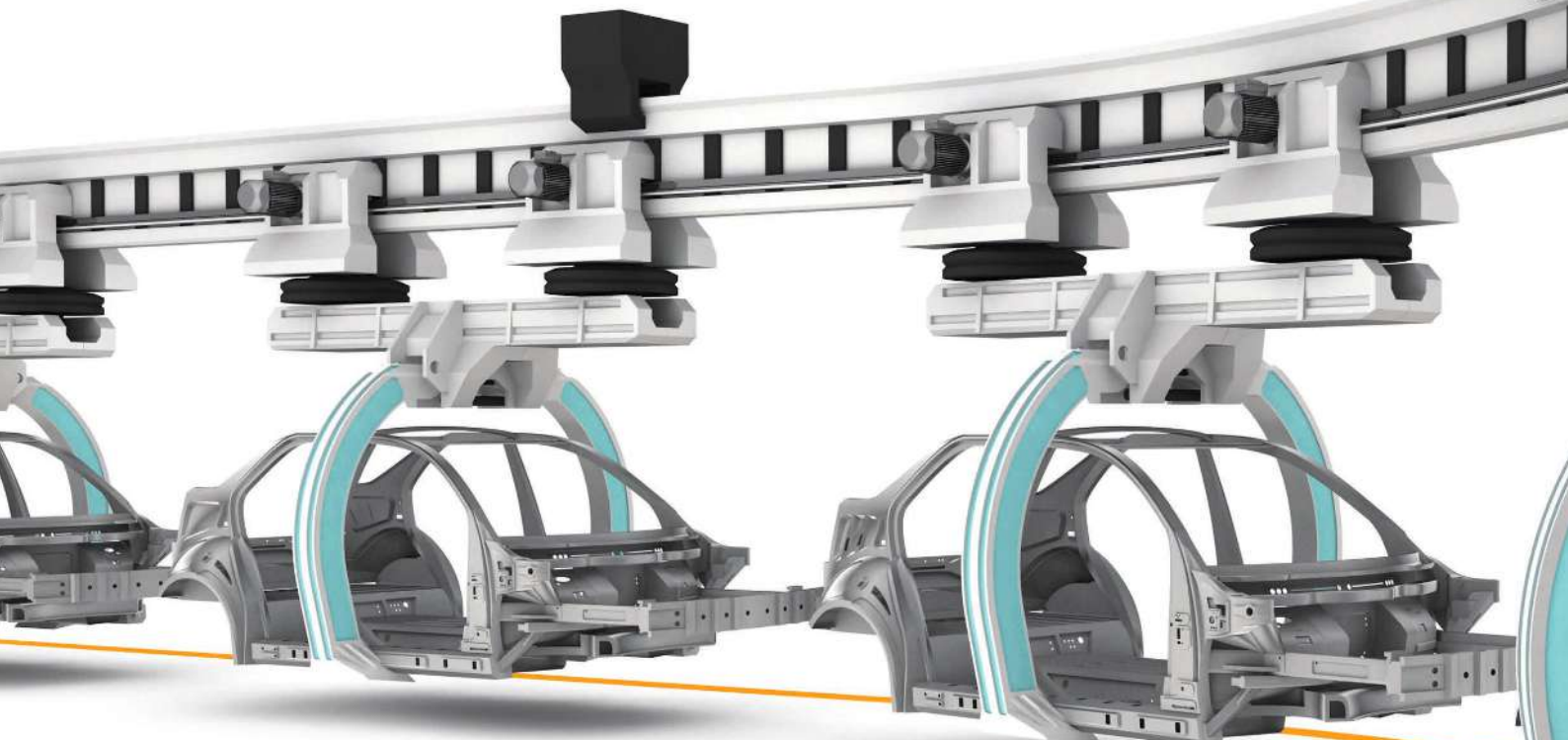


12-month contract | Easy self-install | Number 1 for customer service

Visit quartix.com/uk or call **01686 807 607** to schedule a free demo

Terms and conditions apply

Growing list of RDE2-compliant models 'won't stop' diesel's demise



Crumbs of comfort are all industry experts can offer

By Gareth Roberts

Once the fuel of choice for the company car driver, diesel's dominance among fleets has been on the wane for some time.

Its reputation tarnished and the attraction of tax-busting hybrid and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) difficult to ignore, numbers have continued to dwindle.

Industry leaders say they cannot see a way back for the embattled fuel and this is despite diesel beginning its fightback last year, when the first cars complying with the latest emissions standard began joining UK fleets (*Fleet News*, April 25, 2019).

Cars qualifying for the so-called RDE2 standard do not attract the 4% diesel company car tax surcharge, while fleets benefit from not having to pay the higher first-year rate of VED.

Shaun Sadlier, head of consultancy at Arval UK, says the savings from choosing a RDE2 diesel company car can run into "thousands of pounds" over a typical three-to-four-year lease contract.

"Fleets operating RDE2 cars also

benefit from lower Class 1A NICs and first-year VED costs in comparison with a non-compliant model," he said.

Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) and BMW were among the first to offer RDE2 cars, while Vauxhall has now become the first volume manufacturer to offer the emissions standard across its range.

James Taylor, general sales director at Vauxhall, told *Fleet News*: "That means all new Vauxhalls avoid the 4% diesel surcharge on benefit-in-kind (BIK), offering savings to our customers of up to £22 and £43 per month for 20% and 40% taxpayers, compared with the same (non-compliant) models."

STRICTER LIMITS

The on-the-road Real Driving Emissions (RDE) test was introduced alongside the new emissions testing regime, the Worldwide harmonised Light vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP), in two stages.

RDE1 was introduced in September 2017 for new car type approvals and applied to all new car registrations

from September, last year. Vehicles compliant with this standard are designated Euro 6d-Temp. The stricter RDE2 standard came into force from January for new type approvals and will be applicable to all new cars, which will be labelled Euro 6d, from January 2021.

Cars certified to RDE1 (Euro 6d-Temp) must emit less than 2.1 times the Euro 6 NOx limit of 80mg/km for diesel and 60mg/km for petrol engines. This conformity factor tightens to 1.43 times for RDE2-compliant (Euro 6d) vehicles.

In 2023, it's expected conformity factors will be removed, aligning laboratory and on-road emissions limits.

Alongside Vauxhall, other Groupe PSA brands have become RDE2-compliant, including all Citroën and DS diesel models, plus the majority of Peugeots now also meet the stricter emissions standard.

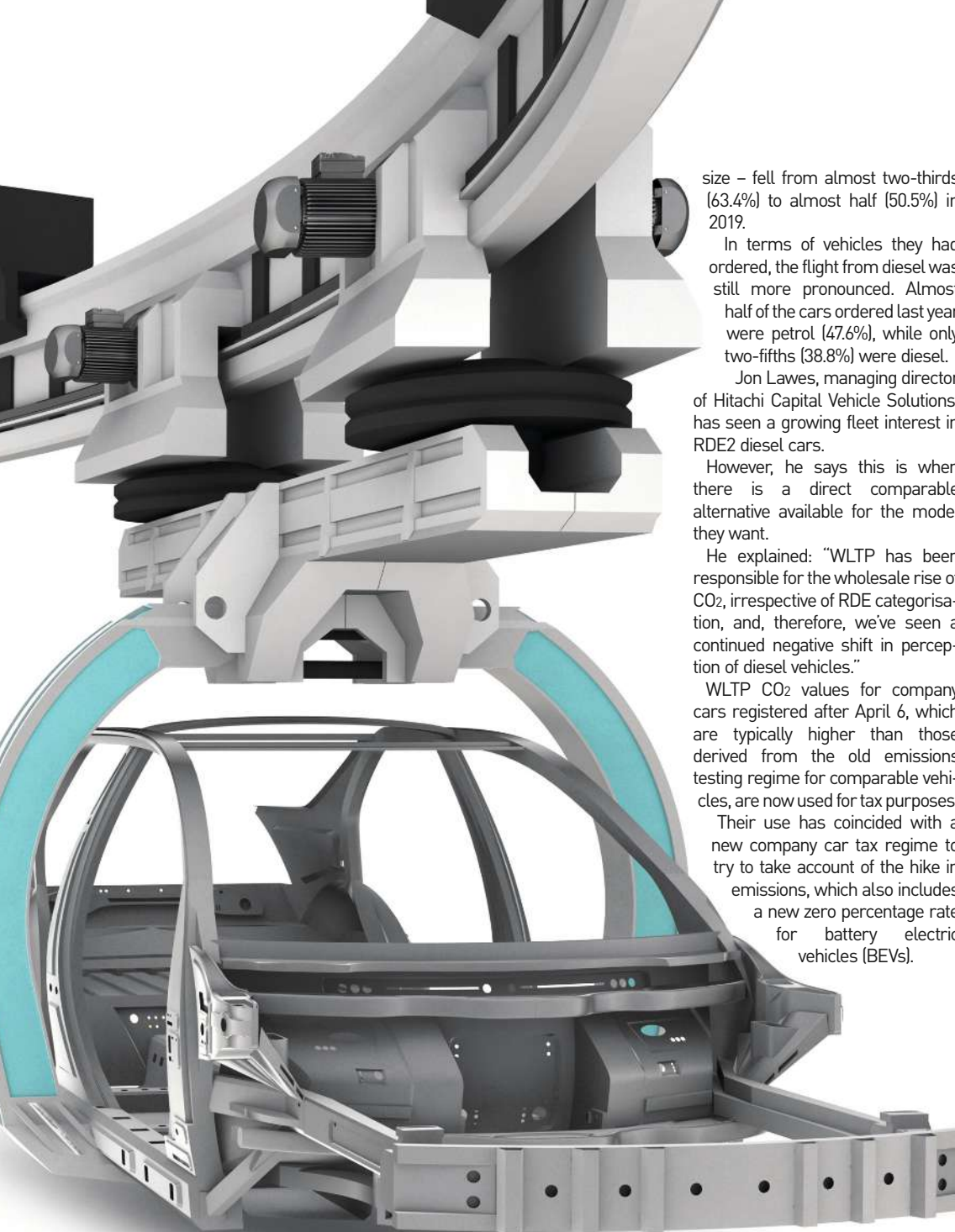
RDE2 models include all 1.5-litre and 2.0-litre BlueHDi-powered Citroëns and DSs, with manual and EAT8 automatic transmissions.

BlueHDi versions of the Peugeot



DRIVERS SEEM TO BE MORE FOCUSED ON THE TAX BENEFITS OF PLUG-IN HYBRID AND PURE ELECTRIC CARS

CHRIS CHANDLER, LEX AUTOLEASE



3008 and 508 have also qualified, along with the new 208 and 2008.

Martin Gurney, who is responsible for fleet and used vehicle sales for Peugeot, Citroën and DS in the UK, says Groupe PSA has been “working hard” to ensure its vehicles are compliant ahead of schedule.

He added: “These early announcements should reassure customers that we are committed to engineering clean and efficient powertrains for all drivers. The fact that most of our diesel models already meet the forthcoming RDE2 standards speaks volumes about the development that goes into our engines.”

BMW continues to add RDE2 models, while Hyundai says it will add further RDE2 engines to its

line-up to join the i10, later this year.

Other manufacturers, such as Audi, Škoda, Renault and Kia, which do not currently have any RDE2 cars, say launches in the second half of the year will see compliant models come through.

But will a wider choice of cars, which avoid the 4% surcharge, be enough to halt the demise of diesel?

DIESEL'S DECLINE

The leasing industry is reporting growing interest from savvy fleets, but all admit the focus is shifting to zero emission motoring.

Figures from the *Fleet News* FN50 show that the proportion of diesel cars on the FN50 fleet – the UK's top 50 leasing companies by risk fleet

size – fell from almost two-thirds (63.4%) to almost half (50.5%) in 2019.

In terms of vehicles they had ordered, the flight from diesel was still more pronounced. Almost half of the cars ordered last year were petrol (47.6%), while only two-fifths (38.8%) were diesel.

Jon Lawes, managing director of Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, has seen a growing fleet interest in RDE2 diesel cars.

However, he says this is when there is a direct comparable alternative available for the model they want.

He explained: “WLTP has been responsible for the wholesale rise of CO₂, irrespective of RDE categorisation, and, therefore, we've seen a continued negative shift in perception of diesel vehicles.”

WLTP CO₂ values for company cars registered after April 6, which are typically higher than those derived from the old emissions testing regime for comparable vehicles, are now used for tax purposes.

Their use has coincided with a new company car tax regime to try to take account of the hike in emissions, which also includes a new zero percentage rate for battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

PLUG-IN INCENTIVES

Lawes says he expects a “continuing overall decline” in diesel market share as more fleets opt for plug-in hybrid or BEV alternatives.

However, he did offer a glimmer of hope for diesel powertrains. “We expect RDE2 models will cause this decline to plateau as this will provide a favourable cost-effective option for some sectors and drivers.”

David Bushnell, principal consultant at Alphabet (GB), said: “For those high mileage drivers, where diesel is still probably the number one choice for fleets, the selection of an RDE2 vehicle will clearly make sense in terms of personal taxation and national insurance costs.

“It's also an existing technology

that many drivers are comfortable using. But, even here, we're seeing mild hybrid technology coming in to reduce drivetrains' CO₂ output.”

However, he says the “clear additional tax benefits” for choosing plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles, revealed in the Budget, will prove hard to ignore.

Chris Chandler, principal consultant at Lex Autolease, has seen a similar trend. He said: “The cost savings and environmental benefits of a plug-in hybrid or full electric alternative are more attractive at the moment.

“The main question we're being asked by fleets on a daily basis is how they can start – or accelerate – their transition along the ‘Road to Zero’.

“The availability of RDE2 vehicles and how to optimise diesel fleets seems to be far lower down fleet managers' agendas.”

GROWING INTEREST

Chandler's comments appear to be backed up by the results of a recent Energy Saving Trust survey.

It revealed that one-in-three UK fleet managers expect half of their company car fleet to be electric by 2025, and seven-in-10 fleet managers are preparing to buy an electric car within two years.

Matthew Walters, head of consultancy and customer data services at LeasePlan UK, said: “From our conversations with fleet managers, it's evident WLTP is still the main consideration when it comes to compliance-related tax savings and how this impacts the vehicle selection process.”

He expects sales of internal combustion vehicles (ICEs) to fall as electric vehicles become more available and increasingly affordable.

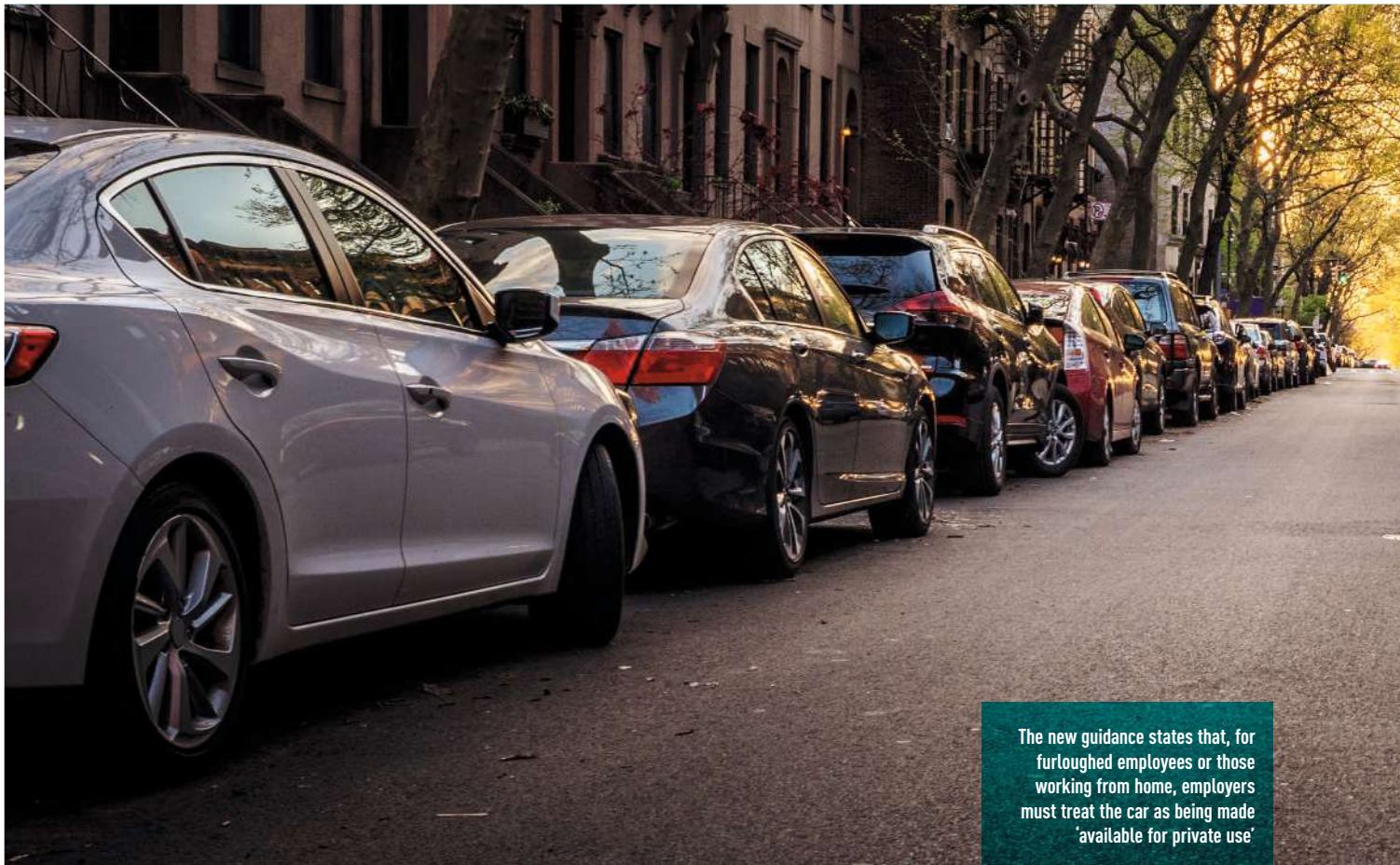
Lex Autolease has seen a significant increase in demand for plug-in hybrid and full electric vehicles over the past 12 months, especially since the 0% BIK tax announcement.

Chandler says a “good awareness” of wholelife costs in the market is driving the shift towards low and zero-emission driving.

He said: “Rather than pay 25-30% tax on a RDE2-compliant diesel vehicle, company car drivers seem to be more focused on taking advantage of the tax benefits of plug-in hybrid and pure electric cars.”

As a result, the UK's largest vehicle leasing company, Lex Autolease, says it doesn't anticipate increased availability and understanding of RDE2-compliant models will significantly slow the decline of diesel.

Chandler added: “RDE2-compliant models will simply account for a growing proportion of the existing diesel market.”



The new guidance states that, for furloughed employees or those working from home, employers must treat the car as being made 'available for private use'

'Send the car keys back to avoid tax' advice comes in for strong criticism

Fleet industry and tax advisers believe new HMRC guidance falls short of the mark

By Gareth Roberts

Gaps in new company car tax guidance issued by HMRC could pose a problem for road safety and leave question marks over tax liabilities, the industry has warned.

The advice has been issued by tax officials, with the aim of helping fleet decision-makers deal with company car drivers who are working from home or who have been furloughed.

Some eight million employees were registered on the Government's job retention scheme by the middle of May, while the majority of those who have continued to work have done so from home, including tens of thousands who pay benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax on a company car.

That benefit, however, is being questioned by some employees,

with vehicles stood idle on drive-ways.

RETURNING KEYS

HMRC's new guidance suggests how employees could return keys and avoid paying BIK, but the fleet and leasing industry is warning the measures announced could fall short in practice.

Caroline Sandall, co-chair of fleet trade and training body the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP), says HMRC has listened, but only "up to a point".

"We now have a mechanism for taking company drivers out of benefit-in-kind," she said. "However, there are concerns; the main practical element being the handing back of car keys to employers."

Tax officials now say they will

accept a company car is unavailable where the contract has been terminated from the date that the car keys (including tabs or fobs) are returned to the employer or to a third-party as instructed by the employer.

HMRC will also accept the vehicle is unavailable, where the contract has not been terminated, after 30 consecutive days from the date the keys (including tabs or fobs) are returned to the employer or to a third-party as instructed by the employer.

The AFP, as well as leasing companies, questions the logic in separating keys from cars, which may need to be moved in an emergency.

Matthew Walters, head of consultancy and customer data services at

LeasePlan UK, labelled it a "health and safety hazard".

"Not everybody has a driveway where they can store their vehicle, so we need to ensure they have a way of safely moving the vehicle whenever it's necessary," he said.

"We also need to remember that asking employees to send their keys back to their employers during the present time is unrealistic and could lead to a number of potential issues for the fleet manager.

"For example, keys could easily get lost in the process, or you might have a situation where the fleet manager returns to the office to find dozens of returned keys sitting in a pile, leading to further confusion and inefficiencies."

In fact, Sandall argued: "The presence of the key in the hand of the



“ASKING EMPLOYEES TO SEND THEIR KEYS BACK TO THEIR EMPLOYERS DURING THE PRESENT TIME IS UNREALISTIC”

MATTHEW WALTERS, LEASEPLAN UK

employer is no more evidence that the car has not been used than a photograph of the odometer or telematics data.”

VEHICLE AVAILABILITY

The new guidance states that, for furloughed employees or those working from home, employers must treat the car as being made ‘available for private use’, even if the employee is instructed to not use the car; asked to take and keep a photographic image of the mileage both before and after a period of furlough; and they are unable to physically return the car or the car cannot be collected from the employee.

For Nigel Morris, tax director at accountancy firm MHA MacIntyre Hudson, it is the requirement for the termination of the contract between employer and leasing company, to determine when a driver is not liable for BIK, which he believes is “slightly odd”.

“Surely, where an employee arranges with an employer, or third-party, to return the keys and does so, the vehicle is unavailable,” said Morris.

He argues that it is “unlikely” an employee would post the keys back to their employer, without mentioning or agreeing it with them.

“So why the need for the 30

consecutive days rule? Particularly, as HMRC go on to say, ‘the return of keys means that a car cannot be driven in any circumstances, even if it is still in the possession of your employee.’”

Furthermore, he said: “Employers are unlikely to cancel contracts, particularly as the standard rules relating to early termination can impose quite hefty costs on the employer for doing so.

“Employers are much more likely to remove the availability of the car, so the contract termination point seems to have very limited application.”

FLEET INTEREST

A recent survey by *Fleet News*, conducted in the first few weeks of the lockdown, showed that almost three-quarters (72.6%) of respondents had less than 10% of their company cars being driven for work.

Any semblance of normality was reserved for just one-in-20 fleets, which said more than 75% of their company car drivers were still on the road.

In terms of actual demand from fleets for the new measure, Nick Hardy, sales director at Ogilvie Fleet, told *Fleet News* there had been very little uptake.

At the start of the lockdown in March, there were a few enquiries,

says Hardy, and after the official guidance was published at the start of May a couple of fleets had been in touch.

“Out of the 700-800 key corporate customers we’ve got, they were the only two [who wanted to discuss the guidance in more detail]; for the rest it hasn’t been an issue.”

He believes that with the ‘stay at home’ message changing in the past few weeks, it is also becoming less of an issue for fleets.

SALARY SACRIFICE

The Government has brought in a range of measures, such as changing the rules on company car availability, to try to help lessen the impact of coronavirus on employees.

They include updating the guidance HMRC issues to employers on salary sacrifice arrangements to allow for the impact of Covid-19.

HMRC rules allow for employees to opt out of a salary sacrifice arrangement where a lifestyle change significantly alters their financial circumstances.

Previously, that lifestyle change included marriage, divorce or a partner becoming redundant or pregnant. However, the Government has now revised the guidance to include changes to circumstances directly arising from coronavirus.

Employment tax specialist Alastair Kendrick said: “It should be noted that this change could prove expensive for the employer. If, for instance, it involved a car provided under salary sacrifice, then they would potentially face the early termination costs imposed by the leasing provider.”

HELP WELCOMED

Nevertheless, Sandall welcomed Government attempts to alleviate some of the challenges facing fleets during this unprecedented time.

“It is positive that HMRC has recognised that this is a life event and that allows us to handle the BIK angle satisfactorily,” she said.

However, she is concerned that it still leaves the fleet to try to sort out impact on the vehicle contract, which would be substantial.

“Our fear surrounding all of this is that it will hang over until P11D submission next year, and that employers and employees will be left to debate any fallout in a relatively ad hoc manner, which is a far from satisfactory situation,” said Sandall.

“We’d really like HMRC to be taking a further look and will be doing our best to get them to address the issues we are raising over the next few weeks and months.”

Covid-19 has helped to clear the air – now battle is on to keep it that way

Gridlock fears if commuters shun public transport in favour of cars

By Gareth Roberts

City transport systems are being re-imagined for life after lockdown. Pavements are being widened, pop-up bike lanes created and some roads are being closed to cars and vans altogether.

Social distancing has drastically reduced the capacity of public transport and people are being urged to walk or cycle instead.

Transport secretary Grant Shapps said: "Getting Britain moving again, while not overcrowding our transport network, represents another enormous logistical challenge."

He has announced a £2 billion package to encourage the much-needed modal shift in transport as people return to work.

An initial £250 million emergency active travel fund will pay for pop-up bike lanes, wider pavements, and cycle- and bus-only corridors in England.

Shapps says that over the next few

months, the Government will set out further measures to make a "once in a generation" change to the way people travel in Britain.

It has also issued local authorities with new statutory guidance telling them to re-allocate road space for significantly increased numbers of cyclists and pedestrians.

AIR QUALITY

Central and local government are keen to build on air quality improvements achieved during lockdown.

New data suggests daily global emissions of CO₂ fell by 17% at the peak of the shutdown, because of the measures taken by governments in response to Covid-19.

Lockdown has also seen the most dangerous air quality indicator PM2.5 levels significantly fall in 13 of the UK's largest cities, with London showing the biggest drop (34%), followed by Leicester (21%) and Edinburgh (17%).

But, without public transport able

to take the strain and a reduction in road capacity thanks to new walking and cycling initiatives, could air quality gains be quickly lost?

Shapps said: "One of the few positive benefits about the crisis is drastically better air quality and the health benefits that that brings."

"More than 20,000 extra deaths a year in the UK are attributed to nitrogen dioxide emissions, which are highest in areas with most road traffic."

"We want to try to preserve this (improvement) as much as possible."

ROADS CLOSED

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has said some streets in the capital will be converted to walking and cycling only, with others restricted to all traffic apart from buses.

The 'Streetspace' measures include a plan for streets between London Bridge and Shoreditch, Euston and Waterloo, and Old Street and Holborn to be limited to buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

Access for emergency services and disabled people will be maintained, but Khan says deliveries on some streets may need to be made outside congestion charging hours.

Waterloo Bridge and London Bridge may also be restricted to people walking, cycling and buses only, with pavements widened.

Euston Road is one of the first main thoroughfares in the capital to have temporary cycle lanes introduced. Park Lane could follow suit.

Pavements are also being widened in more than 20 locations, including in Brixton and Earl's Court, with more to follow in the coming weeks.

Khan said: "These plans will transform parts of central London to create one of the largest car-free areas in any capital city in the world."

LESS CONGESTION

Greater Manchester local authorities, meanwhile, have launched the

Deserted city streets have helped to lower CO₂ emissions

'Safe Streets Save Lives' campaign to support social distancing during coronavirus lockdown and recovery.

They are prioritising a range of temporary, pop-up measures such as footway extensions, one-way streets, removing through traffic on certain roads and adding extra cycle lanes.

The changes are being paid for from £5m of funding made available through the mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund.

Traffic volumes have fallen by about 60% across Greater Manchester, with walking and cycling playing an increasingly important role.

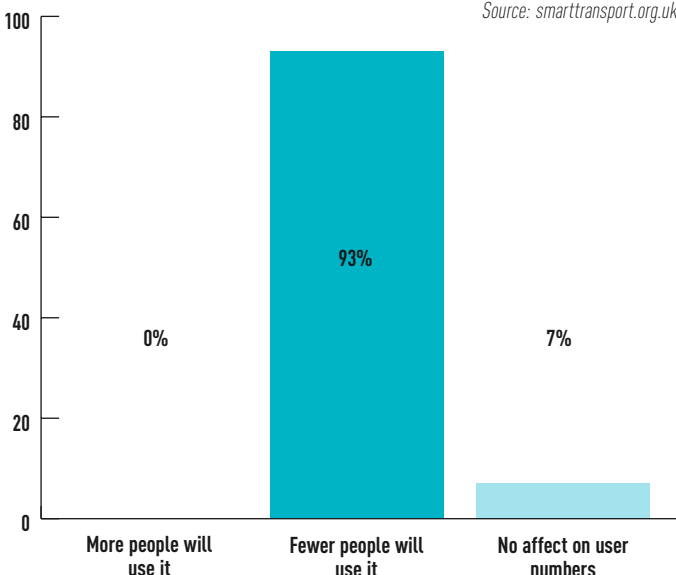
They now account for approximately 33% of all journeys, with cycling up 22% compared with pre-lockdown data.

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, said: "Whatever people's motivation, these choices are contributing to cleaning up our city's air and causing less congestion on our roads, and that's something we must sustain for the immediate future."

However, as schemes are fast-tracked in towns and cities across the country, with little opportunity for consultation, fears are mounting that fleet operations could be severely hampered (see page 76).

WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS?

Source: smarttransport.org.uk





“ONE OF THE FEW POSITIVE BENEFITS ABOUT THE CRISIS IS DRASTICALLY BETTER AIR QUALITY”

GRANT SHAPPS, DFT

'GRIDLOCKED' CITIES

Deliveries have been highlighted as a major concern, but congestion could pose a further headache for fleets; exacerbated by a reduction in road space and the potential for commuters to choose the car over cycling or walking as an alternative to public transport.

The AA president Edmund King says there could be an increase in car use in cities where people “shun public transport for fear of the virus”.

A recent survey by Ipsos Mori found that more than three-in-five (61%) of people polled in early May are concerned about using public transport due to the perceived infection risk.

Meanwhile, nine-out-of-10 respondents to a Smart Transport survey believe fewer people will use public transport over the next few years.

In Wuhan, China, private car usage nearly doubled when lockdown ended, rising from 34% before the outbreak to 66% after lockdown.

Shapps acknowledged that, with public transport capacity severely restricted, “more cars could be drawn to the road” and towns and cities could become “gridlocked”.

LOW CARBON

Paul Jones, chair of the automobile division at the Institution of Mechan-



ical Engineers (IMechE), says if the car becomes the transport choice for people returning to work in the UK, then a switch to lower carbon fuels such as E10 petrol and biodiesel should be considered.

Jones claims this could “very quickly help to offset any potential CO₂ increase”.

By increasing the ethanol content of petrol to 10%, E10 has the potential to cut CO₂ from transport by 750,000 tonnes per year. That's the equivalent to taking about 350,000 cars off the road, Government figures suggest.

IMechE launched a consultation in March on E10 petrol becoming

standard at UK filling stations from next year.

Current petrol grades in the UK already contain up to 5% bioethanol, known as E5. E10 would see this percentage increased up to 10%. This is a blend which is already well used in other countries such as Belgium, Finland, France and Germany.

Jones said: “Placing a new focus on how greater use of biofuels and e-fuels could be increased in our transport energy mix will provide a bridge between our current technologies and infrastructures and those we expect to see in 10 years' time.”

HOMEWORKING

Further respite might be provided by those staff working from home during the lockdown, continuing to do so in the future.

A survey by The AA showed two thirds (66%) of respondents were working from home, while one third (34%) were unable to do so.

One-in-10 said they would work from home more often once the lockdown is lifted, with this increasing to 23% among those aged 35-44.

Such changes in working patterns could help balance the switch away from public transport, but also force fleets to re-think policies, in terms of the number of type of vehicles they operate.

Neil King, senior data journalist at Autovista Group, said: “The pandemic has been a major driver of digitalisation and increased working from home.”

“Many companies that previously resisted allowing employees to work from home have changed their position, albeit often through necessity.”

Looking forward, he says a change in working patterns is “certain” and may influence fleet purchases as employees commute less and sales people participate in more online meetings and conduct fewer in person, reducing mileage rates and changing vehicle needs.

THE BIG PICTURE

HAVE

Coronavirus has a silver lining, a positive, something to rejoice in. It has dramatically improved air quality.

That is the rhetoric coming from the World Health Organisation (WHO), which has already come in for criticism for not reacting quickly enough to the pandemic.

The WHO points to the huge reduction in emissions as proof that short-term measures can have a significant impact. However, those measures stem from a global lockdown which has removed vehicles from the roads but could result in long-lasting economic hardship. Some experts predict a strong probability of the UK entering a deep recession with slow recovery.

Air quality is a major issue, contributing to thousands of premature deaths each year in the UK and needs urgent action. But the WHO message implies 'air quality at any cost'.

That would be tough to stomach by governments, local authorities, businesses and the public alike if it leads to recession, job losses and poverty. A balance needs to be struck to engage the companies and people who can have the biggest effect on air quality.

Nevertheless, Covid-19 does offer an opportunity to reshape transport and travel, embed new behaviours around walking and cycling that we've seen flourish in recent weeks, and move the emphasis towards working from home, which would reduce the number of cars on the roads.

Companies as diverse as Barclays, Twitter and WPP, have already indicated that the days of hundreds of people working in the same office are numbered and they anticipate flexible working, spreading people across smaller offices, and working from home will become commonplace. It'll save a lot of money leasing big offices in city centres.

Does this reverse the global trend towards urbanisation, as people no longer feel the need to move to the city for employment, instead working from suburban and rural locations? That would fundamentally change the transport infrastructure requirements.

We believe that cars, vans and trucks are not the enemy; emissions from internal combustion engines are the cause of air quality and CO₂ woes.

As we shift towards electric vehicles, cars, vans and trucks will still have a crucial role to play in keeping the economy running and keeping people safe. Essential fleets provide an essential service.

■ Turn to page 29 to find out how frontline fleets are adapting to the challenges presented by Covid-19.



Stephen Briers,
editor-in-chief,
Fleet News

EDITOR'S PICK

BENEFIT-IN-KIND (BIK) TAX

No benefit being in lockdown



ISTOCK.COM/GEORGE LERK

Stuart Daglish wrote:

Having read 'HMRC to publish company car tax guidance' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 7) I have a company car plus fuel benefit. I work part-time and visit customers all over the UK.

I have underlying health issues, three heart attacks, heart bypass and diabetic.

My car has been parked up on my drive since March 16 and will be for a further six weeks. This will bring the total to at least three months.

I currently pay £350 per month extra for this privilege of the car and fuel while I am furloughed, surely this cannot be right?

• THE EDITOR'S PICK WINS A £20 JOHN LEWIS VOUCHER

Vince added:

Great article, I was looking for some news to see current rules around benefit-in-kind tax during lockdown. I find it highly unfair that HMRC still expect full tax on a vehicle I cannot use as intended and not because my company says so, but the Government says so. The whole thing is completely wrong. How can one very short essential trip weekly possibly be classed as a perk? I'd save my £180 a month I pay in tax and walk to the shops.

PUMP PRICES

Forecourts slow to reflect wholesale price change

Gordy wrote:

Having read 'Collapse in oil prices not reflected at fuel pumps' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 21), lower pump prices would also encourage critical care workers and key workers to fill up rather than run vehicles with less than full tanks.

In turn, retailers would sell more, and wholesalers would shift more, and suppliers would then have more room to store this cheaper product while it's cheap.

'Make hay while the sun shines' or, in other words, now is the time for a real retail price reduction and, in turn, the whole world would benefit, not just the stockbrokers.

CONTACT US

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

Burning question:
What do you expect to see less of when we return to the 'new normal'?

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief
Stephen Briers 01733 468024
stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk
Large and expensive corporate head offices

Deputy editor
Sarah Tooze
(Shared paternity leave)

News editor
Gareth Roberts 01733 468314
gareth.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk
Joy on people's faces

Features editor
Andrew Ryan 01733 468308
andrew.ryan@bauermedia.co.uk
People's faces

Head of digital
Jeremy Bennett 01733 468655
jeremy.bennett@bauermedia.co.uk
Touring bands, unless it's at drive-in gigs

Web producer
Jess Maguire 01733 468655
jess.maguire@bauermedia.co.uk
I expect to see fewer people attending concerts and festivals. Hope I'm wrong. The thought of mass gatherings fills me with fear at the moment

Staff writer
Matt de Prez 01733 468277
matt.deprez@bauermedia.co.uk
People

Photos istock, Chris Lowndes

PRODUCTION

Head of publishing
Luke Neal
Small businesses

Production editor
David Buckley
I expect the Government's 'go by car, avoid public transport' advice to result in us seeing less from clean air campaigners for a while

Senior designer
Chris Stringer
I expect to see less tolerance for people who don't follow simple rules

Head of project management
Leanne Patterson

Project managers
Hollie Ismail, Kerry Unwin, Chelsie Tate
b2bpm@bauermedia.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Commercial director
Sean Childerley

Group advertising manager
Sheryl Graham 01733 366467

Account directors
Lisa Turner 01733 366471
Stuart Wakeling 01733 366470

Account managers
Emma Rogers 01733 363219
Lucy Herbert 01733 363218

Telerecruitment
01733 468275/01733 468328

EVENTS

Event director
Chris Lester

Event manager
Sandra Evitt 01733 468123

Senior event planner
Kate Howard 01733 468146

PUBLISHING

Managing director
Tim Lucas 01733 468340

Office manager
Jane Hill 01733 468319

Chief Financial Officer
Lisa Hayden

MD Automotive Group
Niall Clarkson

CEO of Bauer Publishing UK
Chris Duncan

President, Bauer Global Publishing
Rob Munro-Hall

Subscribe to Fleet News:
www.fleetnews.co.uk/subscribe
+44 (0)1635 589495
Subscriptions@email.fleetnews.co.uk
UK: annual £85 / two years £145 / three years £195. Issue price £6
Europe and Eire: annual £135 / two years £230 / three years £315

ROAD SAFETY

Fleets urged to read Renown ruling



Edward Handley wrote:

Having read 'Renown Consultants to pay £750k after double fatal crash' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 14), a lot of companies would do well to read the judge's comments carefully – only paying lip service to stated policies and procedures, expediency over-riding policies and wilful blindness to fatigue management, etc.

How many times have we heard that? How often do managers ignore the travel time when scheduling jobs because they are under pressure to get the work done somehow?

FLEET TRIBUTE

Leaving a fitting legacy

Colin Paterson wrote:

Having read 'Tribute paid to former IAM RoadSmart chairman Alistair Cheyne' (fleetnews.co.uk, May 12), what very sad news; I worked at the IAM during Alistair's tenure as chairman and he was indeed driven, passionate and determined to make a difference to everything he touched.

Thoughts are very much with his family. His contribution to road, motoring and road safety will be a fitting legacy.



FINES AND PENALTIES

Rule change urged to improve administration



Glenn Ewen wrote:

Having read 'Leniency expected for speeding and parking fine response times' (fleetnews.co.uk, April 17), having been working from home now for the past three weeks, it is clear there needs to be a reform of the speeding/parking fine administration.

How difficult would it be, in this electronic age, to add an email address to a V5C? Some tasks can already be completed online, so why not provide the email address (generic for companies) for communications?

Make the rules the same as for notifying address changes and they should always be able to contact registered keepers and forward their details on to authorised parties.

Fleet News is published 15 times a year. Bauer Consumer Media Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales with company number 01176085, registered address Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6EA. VAT no 918 5617 01. H Bauer Publishing and Bauer Consumer Media Ltd are authorised and regulated by the FCA (Ref No. 845898) and (Ref No. 710067). No part of the magazine may be reproduced in any form in whole or in part,

without prior permission of the publisher. All material published remains the copyright of Bauer Consumer Media Ltd.

We reserve the right to edit letters, copy or images submitted to the magazine without further consent. The submission of material to Bauer Media whether unsolicited or requested, is taken as permission to publish in the magazine, including any licensed editions throughout the world. Any fees paid in the UK include remuneration for any use in any other licensed editions.

We cannot accept any responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, images or materials lost or damaged in the post. Whilst every reasonable care is taken to ensure accuracy, the publisher is not responsible for any errors or omissions nor do we accept any liability for any loss or damage, howsoever caused, resulting from the use of the magazine. ISSN 0953-8526.

Printing: PCP, Telford



Complaints: Bauer Consumer Media Limited is a member of the

Independent Press Standards Organisation (www.ipso.co.uk) and endeavours to respond to and resolve your concerns quickly. Our Editorial Complaints Policy (including full details of how to contact us about editorial complaints and IPSO's contact details) can be found at www.bauermedia-complaints.co.uk. Our email address for editorial complaints covered by the Editorial Complaints Policy is complaints@bauermedia.co.uk

TARGET 2050: Delivering net zero emission transport

Fleet views sought as Government creates plan to shape the clean future of transport. *Andrew Ryan* reports

Fleets are being given the opportunity to help determine how the UK will achieve net zero emissions across every mode of transport by 2050.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is developing its Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) to set out in detail what government, business and society will have to do to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed to meet its 2050 greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions target.

As part of the consultation process, the DfT has released a document called 'Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge' (DTSC) to provide context to the current challenges and steps to be taken when developing the TDP.

While there have already been a number of strategies to reduce GHGs in individual transport modes – such as the Road to Zero Strategy and Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy – the TDP will take a co-ordinated, cross-modal approach.

"Through the TDP, 2020 will be the year we set out the policies and plans needed to tackle transport emissions," says Grant Shapps, secretary of state for transport.

"We want to hear from individuals, businesses, trade associations, local authorities, scientists, researchers, innovators, interest groups and environmental groups as we develop the first comprehensive action plan for decarbonising transport."

The TDP will cover six strategic priorities:

- Decarbonisation of road vehicles
- Decarbonising how we get our goods
- Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport
- Place-based solutions
- UK as a hub for green transport technology and innovation
- Reducing carbon in a global economy.

The DfT intends to host a series of workshops to work with stakeholders and representative groups to generate and test policy proposals. It will also seek public feedback through ongoing online consultations and market research.

The document can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-the-transport-decarbonisation-plan.

Businesses are also invited to share their views on what actions government should take in order to decarbonise transport by emailing TDT@dft.gov.uk

Shapps adds: "Success will require the sector, and its users, to embrace new technology and innovation like never before."

Here we look at the strategic priorities for creating the TDP, which will be published in autumn 2020.



1 ACCELERATING MODAL SHIFT TO PUBLIC AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT

The Government wants to make public transport and active travel, such as cycling and walking, the natural first choice for daily activities.

Research carried out as part of the DfT Transport and Technology Public Attitudes Tracker in 2018 found cars are the most common mode of transport regardless of the journey type.

It found that 94% of car journeys were under 25 miles, with 58% less than five miles. The research also found 87% of car users in England feel their current lifestyle means they need to own a car.

The DTSC says: "Cycling and walking are the ultimate forms of zero greenhouse gas emission transport. For those able to do so, we would like cycling and walking to be the easy and obvious choice for short journeys."

The DfT says it is already exploring how vehicles can be used differently, such as through shared mobility.

It adds new technologies and business models may help facilitate modal shift, such as mobility as a service (MaaS) platforms.

"This will require behavioural changes and we will consider how government and others can support this shift through infrastructure and encouraging those forms of travel," says the DTSC.

The DfT research also found 5% of journeys in 2018 were made by bus, while buses and coaches represented 3% of domestic transport greenhouse gas emissions.

In this area, the Government is prioritising that conventional buses will be replaced with zero emission buses and infrastructure over a period of time and that measures are introduced to address declining bus usage across the country.

However, it faces a challenge to persuade people back into public transport due to the coronavirus.

A new survey by Transport Focus shows 62% of people will only use public transport if social distancing measures are implemented, while 60% say they will favour the car over buses and trains. Just more than half would only be happy to return to public transport if passengers are required to wear masks. Fewer than a quarter will be happy to use public transport once travel restriction measures are relaxed.

2 PLACE-BASED SOLUTIONS

The DTSC notes transport GHG emissions are not consistent across the country and a 'one-size-fits-all' solution will not be appropriate.

"Understanding where, how and why emissions occur in specific locations, be it around a major airport, port, motorway junction or within a city centre will enable us to develop a tailored response," says the report.

The Government will work with relevant stakeholders such as local authorities, mayoral combined authorities and subnational transport bodies to consider how to best address emissions at a local level.

SPONSOR'S COMMENT

By Stuart Thomas, director of fleet and SME at The AA



Research by The AA has revealed the five most common causes of callouts. A study of all jobs across the UK over the past four years highlighted

batteries as the number one cause of a breakdown.

The top five problems are as follows:

1. Batteries
2. Tyres
3. Engine failure
4. Problems with high-voltage charging cables
5. Failure of in-car equipment

The appearance of HV charging cables on the list is a clear reflection of the greater use of electric vehicles across the UK.

In simple terms, a non-functioning cable means the vehicle will run out of power.

All of our patrols now carry a special fob, allowing them access to Chargemaster's 5,000-strong Polar network, meaning electric vehicles can get moving again quickly.

In-car equipment failures can cover a multitude of issues, many of which cannot be anticipated.

However, ensuring that service and maintenance intervals are adhered to, will minimise the risk of unanticipated issues.

I offer this advice to fleet managers: Instilling good driving practices and ensuring drivers make regular visual checks of their vehicles will help to highlight any issues as soon as they arise – and allow them to be addressed proactively, rather than failing in-service with all the disruption this can cause.

Similarly, making sure drivers bring their vehicles in for routine service is vital to identifying any potential issues and taking the necessary steps to repair or replace parts which may cause a problem.

Visit theaa.com/business for more information.

The AA logo is positioned in the top right corner of the advertisement. It consists of the letters 'AA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, set against a yellow background that features a stylized sunburst or starburst pattern.

We'll keep your fleet working for you

From 24-hour breakdown cover to accident assistance, with mobile technical services and connected solutions that help keep your wheels in motion.



Talk to us today about **Business Breakdown Cover**

Call **0800 294 2994** using promo code: 0770

Or visit **theAA.com/business**



DECARBONISATION OF ROAD VEHICLES

The transition to zero emission vehicles is already under way in the UK, but the DTSC says "major changes to the vehicles we drive and the way we use our roads" will be needed to achieve the 2050 target.

Three years ago, the Government announced a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040 to cut transport emissions.

It is currently consulting on bringing that forward to 2035 or earlier if a faster transition appears feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time. It plans to conclude the consultation on July 31.

The report says there are currently more than 240,000 battery electric and plug-in hybrid cars registered in the UK, but data from the DfT shows that, at the end of 2019, there were 31.9 million cars in the UK – meaning ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) make up less than 1% of the overall car parc.

The numbers of ULEVs sold continues to rise – figures from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders show that in the first three months of 2020, 18,256 BEVs and 13,662 PHEVs were registered, year-on-year increases of 204% and 59% respectively.

However, the report says, these registrations have been restricted by the availability of these

types of vehicles.

For example, it says the number of BEV models on the global market is around 30, compared with more than 350 for conventional vehicles.

Supply is starting to increase, though, and the Government expects to see around 20 new models available in the UK this year.

As well as vehicle availability, the DfT says more charging infrastructure will be needed alongside improvements to the consumer experience of using it.

"While many electric vehicle (EV) drivers are likely to choose to charge their vehicles at home, or at their workplace, 20% to 30% of motorists do not have off-street parking," says the report.

"This proportion increases in urban areas where air quality concerns are most acute."

The report says Government funding has supported the installation of more than 18,000 charging devices, providing more than 25,000 public charge points. This includes more than 2,600 rapid charging units.

Over the next five years the Government is

providing £500 million to support the roll-out of a fast charging network for EVs, ensuring that drivers will never be further than 30 miles from a rapid charging station.

This will include a rapid charging fund to help businesses with the cost of connecting fast charge points to the electricity grid.

Other current policies to increase EV uptake include investing around £2.5 billion in the sector, with grants available for plug-in cars, taxis, motorcycles and vans, as well as funding to support charge point infrastructure at homes, workplaces, on residential streets and across the wider roads network.

In addition, Budget 2020 included the announcement that the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) will complete a comprehensive EV charging infrastructure review.

"Based on the best available evidence we project that these (2050 decarbonisation) ambitions will not currently be met without additional action being taken. Policies to help deliver these ambitions will be included in the TDP," adds the report.

240,000

battery electric and
plug-in hybrid cars are
registered in the UK



UK AS A HUB FOR GREEN TRANSPORT TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

The Government wants to utilise the UK's scientists, business leaders and innovators to position the UK as an internationally-recognised leader of environmentally sustain-

able technology and innovation in transport.

"We want to ensure robust R&D measures for investment in key technologies to support the move to net zero," says the DTSC.

"Transport innovations, such as digitalisation and making data available to empower customer choice, could tackle congestion, pollution and disconnection while improving our environment." ➡



DECARBONISING HOW WE GET OUR GOODS

The growth in online shopping has seen the proportion of domestic freight moved by road transport increase significantly.

DfT's Transport Statistics Great Britain report shows that in 2018, 193 billion tonne kilometres of domestic freight was moved within the UK, of which 79% was by road, 13% by water and 9% by rail (rounded figures). In 1990, these proportions were 65%, 8% and 28% respectively.

A tonne kilometre is a unit of measure of freight transport which represents the transport of one tonne of goods over a distance of one kilometre.

The report also shows van traffic has increased by 104% since 1990, with DTSC saying much of this change can be attributed to service vehicles and 'last mile' delivery services.

This increase has also led to a rise in emissions from the van parc, with DfT saying its total emissions have increased 67% since 1990 and 19% since 2012.

The Government has already announced a range of measures to decrease van emissions and its central projection, taking into account all current firm and funded policy, is that van GHG emissions will fall 17% from 2018 to 2050, despite a projected increase in van km of nearly 70% over the same period.

104%
increase in van traffic since 1990
says the Transport Statistics
Great Britain report

"These forecasts include only legislated policies or those with confirmed funding, and therefore do not include the 2040 ambition in the Road to Zero strategy or consultation on bringing forward the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles," says DTSC.

"Based on the best available evidence we project these [2050 decarbonisation] ambitions will not currently be met without additional action being taken. Policies to help deliver these ambitions will be included in the TDP."

Action taken so far includes those measures listed in the decarbonisation of road vehicles section (see page 17) such as the plug-in van grant and the investment in EV charging infrastructure.

Van-specific measures include legislating to allow category B (car) licence holders to drive certain alternatively fuelled vans up to a maximum weight of 4.25 tonnes, rather than 3.5 tonnes.

This aims to help to compensate for lost payload capacity due to the added weight and size of some current alternative fuel technologies and help grow the market for ULEV vans.

The DTSC says a huge opportunity exists to transform last-mile deliveries, ensuring an integrated, clean and sustainable delivery system.

"As we consider the future of the transport system, innovative digitally-enabled solutions,

data sharing and collaborative platforms could transform how our goods are moved, potentially also reducing the negative impact of congestion," says the report.

This could include increased use of solutions such as e-cargo bikes. The DTSC highlights a 2018 trial where e-Cargobikes.com worked with supermarket chain Sainsbury's.

Located at the Streatham Common store, a fleet of five e-cargo bikes delivered up to 100 orders a day to local customers who shopped via the retailer's website.

The trial showed that 96.7% of orders could be fulfilled in a single e-cargo bike journey.

The TDP will also look at the role rail freight and HGVs play in goods delivery and distribution.



REDUCING CARBON IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY

The DTSC notes reducing emissions from transport is a global, as well as a UK, priority.

"Clearly areas of transport, including aviation and maritime, are international by nature and are vital components of our international trade and economy," it says.

"We want to harness the UK as a centre of expertise to drive low carbon innovation and travel behaviour that helps enable a global transition to low carbon transport.

"This will boost the UK economy and help to lead the change internationally."

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

6th -7th October 2020. Hall 20, NEC

The UK's leading event for the
fleet and mobility community

REGISTER
— YOUR —
INTEREST
NOW

fleetandmobilitylive.com

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

COVID-19 Notice: Bauer Consumer Media/Fleet & Mobility Live are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and will follow government advice. At this moment in time, we feel that the timing of Fleet & Mobility Live will offer the perfect opportunity to bring the industry back together after such exceptional times. We will ensure additional safety measures are in place to ensure strict hygiene standards are maintained throughout the event. Should you have any concerns about attending or exhibiting, please contact the events team - events@fleetandmobilitylive.com



SHIFTING ATTITUDES

Pioneering two-year ULEV Experience project has helped companies to understand, trial and implement electric vehicles, reports *Andrew Ryan*

Organisations wary of adding electric vehicles to their fleets often change their attitudes when they experience the technology for themselves, says the programme manager of a pioneering project.

The two-year ULEV Experience – a business and public sector support programme dedicated to helping Nottingham-based organisations understand, trial and implement battery electric vehicles (BEVs) – offered a range of events, vehicle loans and fleet reviews ahead of its conclusion in March.

“We came across a number of businesses that were dead against (electric vehicles – EVs) – they just didn’t see the point of electric,” says Rob Anderson, programme manager for ULEV Experience and senior fleet specialist at Cenex.

“But we found that if you could persuade those who were interested – even if they were a little bit sceptical – to get into an electric car and try it for two weeks, then their attitude changes and they see the benefits.

“Going in full bore and replacing everything with EVs is probably going to end up in a bit of a disaster, let’s be honest.

“But get some in, get drivers involved. Help them understand what it means for them as either a company car driver or, if you’re looking at vans, get your drivers into them and help them understand what it means to them as an individual.

“Everyone needs to understand what EVs involve before you can really make wholesale changes.”

The ULEV Experience was supported by Nottingham City Council’s Go Ultra Low City funding and delivered through the Workplace Travel Service and a consortium led by Cenex, with partners from DriveElectric, Energy Saving Trust, RideWise, CleanTech Business and Automotive Comms.

The programme, which also delivered £600,000 of workplace travel grants to support 60 organisations to install both EV charging points and active travel infrastructure, focused on three areas: business engagement and events, ULEV loans and fleet reviews.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Over the two-year period, CleanTech Business and RideWise delivered 23 events which were attended by a total of 619 delegates.

These included:

- Clinics, where specific topics such as EV finance, battery technology and installing charging infrastructure at workplaces were covered in a workshop environment.
- Ride-and-drive events where attendees could learn about the benefits of EVs and take test drives.
- Roadshows, where business park tenants were invited to learn more about the technology and test drive an EV where appropriate.
- An evening business networking reception, where organisations who were interested in using low emission vehicles could listen to an ‘EV Question Time’ panel discussion and network with organisations that had begun to transition their fleets towards electric vehicles.

“We found very quickly that yes, the same people were turning up to different events and that was because they were getting more interested in what’s going on and were able to ask more insightful questions,” says Anderson.

“The first few events were about people’s concerns about the vehicles not having sufficient range or not being available, and then we moved on to the more business-led and deployment-led questions of what



EV roadshows were held throughout the two years of the ULEV Experience

the benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax means for the drivers, and what to do about charging."

The events also created a pipeline of businesses who then progressed to a ULEV loan or a fleet review.

ULEV LOANS

As extended ULEV loan trials were not available through dealerships or manufacturers, leasing company DriveElectric offered organisations the chance to try a choice of nine different makes and models for up to one month.

These ranged from Renault Kangoo ZE and Nissan e-NV200 small vans to Hyundai Kona Electric and Kia e-Niro SUVs.

"The loans allowed companies to dip their toes in the water," says Anderson. "They could give the EVs a good test drive, find out what they actually drive like and get their drivers involved as well."

"We were always trying to make sure that we were giving the right vehicle with the right capabilities to the right company."

"We often spent a lot of time dialling companies back from something like the 64kWh Kona or e-Niro. After all, who wouldn't want a 64kWh battery, but, in many cases, a Volkswagen eGolf or Nissan Leaf was more appropriate."

A total of 75 loans were delivered across 41 organisations, with those companies subsequently ordering 29 EVs from DriveElectric.

A "large number" of companies also stated they would be looking to order electric and

plug-in hybrid vehicles at their next replacement cycle.

ULEV loans were found to be more successful when delivered alongside or after a company had received a fleet review.

This approach allowed the organisation to trial the vehicle within the operations identified as suitable by the review. ➔

Vehicle	Number of loans
Hyundai Kona Electric	19
Hyundai Ioniq Electric	5
Kia e-Niro	6
Kia Niro PHEV	2
Nissan e-NV200	18
Nissan Leaf	9
Renault Kangoo ZE	8
Renault Zoe	4
Volkswagen e-Golf	4

Vehicle	Number of orders after loans
Hyundai Kona Electric	1
Jaguar I-Pace	4
Kia e-Niro	1
MG ZS EV	1
Nissan e-NV200	19
Tesla Model 3	2
Volkswagen e-Golf	1



SPONSOR'S COMMENT

David Savage, Geotab regional manager, UK&I



According to the International Energy Agency (1), carbon emissions are expected to drop by 8% this year, due to the lockdowns of some of the world's largest economies.

Significantly, it is estimated

that it is 8% that is needed to reduce emission levels to less than 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures.

Therefore, realising the environmental and long-term financial impact of electric vehicles (EVs) can have on business's bottom line is important to portray.

A large proportion of this drop in emissions is due to a drop in vehicle transport activity, particularly in urban areas such as London, Manchester, and Birmingham.

As the UK economy begins to recover and re-open, I would expect to see a resurgence in the adoption of EVs given the long-term financial benefits of operating them.

While the introduction of several clean air zones (CAZs) has been pushed back to 2021, the new benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates (0% for fully-electric) should help reignite interest in EVs, particularly given the significantly lower tailpipe emissions compared with internal combustion engines, that EVs are able to provide.

So, not only can EVs help reduce costs through lower fuel, maintenance costs and vehicle longevity, they can also help us improve our environment.

Transitioning to and managing EVs can be a challenge. At Geotab, we use real-life vehicle data to help fleets understand what, where and when is the right time to make the move to electric.

Furthermore, managing EVs creates new obstacles including, when to charge, how much charge is required to make the daily run, and the battery's state-of-health.

We can provide critical insights through our open platform to help you through the electric vehicle journey.

(1) <https://www.carbonbrief.org/iea-coronavirus-impact-on-co2-emissions-six-times-larger-than-financial-crisis>

GEOTAB



EV clinics were held to address gaps in knowledge and allay fears over range and recharging among other concerns

C FLEET REVIEWS

Cenex and Energy Saving Trust delivered 34 fully-funded fleet reviews, each worth up to £11,000, through the programme.

In total, 4,385 vehicles were reviewed, with 673 of these identified as being able to be replaced by battery EVs.

This represented a potential annual carbon emission reduction of 1,008 tonnes and total cost of ownership savings of £269,491 (see table in next column).

The reviews found 29% of cars and 16% of small vans could be replaced with ULEVs, but only 1% of large vans.

"I was a little bit disappointed that we couldn't identify more vehicles to transition, but looking at the fleets in question and the way they operated, some were doing high mileages and some of the vehicles were large executive cars or large vans, and, at the time of running the project, there wasn't good availability of EVs," says Anderson.

"If the programme was relaunched now, more vehicles would be identified as being able to be transitioned because a greater range of EVs is available."

The reviews found some organisations could replace more than 80% of their vehicles with ULEVs, while for others it was less than 5%.

Anderson adds: "A lot of the companies were represented by either fleet managers or fleet directors and they were pleasantly surprised just how many of their vehicles could move across to electric."

The reviews were delivered through a five-step process which included:

- A summary of the organisation's existing fleet,

Potential annual savings

Vehicle type	Vehicles reviewed	Identified replacement ULEVs	Carbon emissions (tonnes) reduction	Total cost of ownership savings
Cars	1,363	396	1,008	£269,491
Small vans	1,661	261		
Large vans	1,361	16		
Total	4,385	673		

where the fleet was categorised into relevant segments and baselined to show fleet size, operational patterns, age profile and environmental performance.

■ Ultra-low emission technology screening, where a high-level assessment of available ULEVs was undertaken to highlight those which have the potential to deliver emission improvements while being economically viable.

■ Vehicle performance reviews, where the operational suitability, total cost of ownership and emissions of the highlighted ULEV technologies were assessed.

■ Individual vehicle selection, where the ULEV technology that offered the largest environmental benefits at an acceptable total cost of ownership was identified, on a per vehicle basis.

■ Summary of recommendations/next steps, where the recommended next steps were provided, including implementation advice where appropriate.

The delivery of a fleet review needed the recipient company to provide specific vehicle information, such as vehicle details, annual mileage and ownership period, but many organisations were

unable to supply such specific information.

In addition, five employee home charging reviews were completed. The aim of these was to identify the possible options available to enable company drivers to charge fleet vehicles at home, therefore reducing the need for the installation and use of depot-based and public charging infrastructure.



ULEV Experience has produced a 'What We've Learnt' report with its findings to enable other cities to benefit from the knowledge and implement their own solutions to address air quality challenges. It can be downloaded at www.ulevexperience.co.uk.



Proactive fleet tools for a changing world

Make the most of your fleet with
productivity, utilisation reports,
routing optimisation, and many more.

GEOTAB®

Find out how Geotab can support your business

www.geotab.co.uk

© 2020 Geotab Inc. All Rights Reserved.

WE KNOW EVS FROM A TO Z

FROM FLEET FUNDING AND CONSULTANCY TO CHARGING AND OUR WORLD-CLASS SERVICE

Whether you're an early adopter or just starting the journey, we'll guide you to meet your environmental targets, lower running costs and reduce your carbon footprint.

Our experts are ready to drive your business forward.

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





Covid-19 has led to dramatic drop in emissions, but what will happen when the crisis passes?

The social distancing and resulting lockdowns put in place to tackle Covid-19 are likely to cause the biggest drop in emissions ever recorded. Analysts estimate worldwide carbon pollution will plunge more this year than the combined reductions seen during the global financial crisis, World War II and the Spanish Flu.

However, it is the actions taken as we move out of lockdown that will define our ability to tackle wider global challenges such as climate change and the need to build socially-just economic prosperity.

The current crisis may, of course, only temporarily cut emissions. Once shuttered factories reopen, commuters get back into their cars and flights once again take to the air, little will have changed in the structure of the global economy – and progress towards net-zero will likely be as slow as ever as air pollution returns to city streets. Unless there is a concerted effort by governments to ensure this does not happen, our current global tragedy could sow the seeds for the next one.

As we have seen with the spread of Covid-19, no problem exists in isolation. While the UK has been brought to a near standstill, with road travel plummeting by as much as 73% as a result of the lockdown, there is no certainty in what happens when the lockdown is lifted.

With a Covid-19 vaccine seemingly some way off it's likely there will be a sharp rise in car travel post lockdown at the expense of public transport in a bid to maintain social distancing. The impact post lockdown from purchasing decisions made by fleet managers as well as the spending decisions of individuals, potentially on cheaper second-hand cars, could have a profound and devastating impact.

For our wider economy the post-pandemic outlook remains extremely uncertain due to the



By Jason Torrance

Clean Air Cities
director, UK100

Partnership convener
Jason Torrance has 25

years' experience in various disciplines. He has held roles as policy director at Sustrans and co-chair of the stakeholder advisory group at Highways England.

unknown duration and severity of lockdown controls and doubts over the shape of the recovery.

Analysis by the International Monetary Fund has resulted in it slashing its forecasts for global growth in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and warning of a slump in output this year unparalleled since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Along with all sectors of our economy, car manufacturers in the UK are being hit hard. With factory lockdowns into mid-May expected to cost UK car makers £8.2 billion, it is hard to imagine how things will return to what we once thought of as normal.

Covid-19 is also impacting local councils. At the time of writing two – Liverpool City Council and Windsor and Maidenhead Council – are on the verge of declaring bankruptcy due to the expense of tackling Covid-19 in addition to a loss in revenue from tourism, parking and other forms of income.

Although hard-pressed, and focused on prioritising local responses to the pandemic, some councils are also taking innovative actions to rethink how public space is used in the absence of motor traffic. Brighton and Hove council set a precedent for other UK towns and cities at the end of April by being the first to close off a major road to allow local people

to get their daily exercise in safety (while adhering to social distancing rules).

Further afield, cities around the world are now beginning to taking the lead in post-coronavirus planning, with a raft of environmental initiatives being rolled out in places from Bogotá to Barcelona to ensure public safety and bolster the actions to tackle the climate emergency.

Launching the newly formed Global Mayors Covid-19 Recovery Task Force, as part of the C40 group of cities, the Mayor of Milan, said: "Our immediate priority is to protect the health of residents and overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we must also look towards how we will keep our people safe in the future. How we structure our recovery efforts will define our cities for decades to come."

As the UK Government begins to plot a course out of lockdown and towards a post Covid-19 new norm, the opportunity must be seized to protect jobs and safeguard the future while paying off debts created by emergency spending on the NHS and incomes. This means re-evaluating infrastructure investments, such as the planned £28bn UK Government roads programme to ensure the country benefits from a jobs boom, from initiatives such as: broadband, batteries, electric cars and home upgrades.

On the global stage, at least, leaders remain resolute on the need for emergency responses to align with bold action to tackle the climate emergency. Speaking at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue, a virtual meeting in late April of more than 30 governments on the climate emergency, António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, urged Governments to act for future generations: "Where taxpayers' money is used to rescue businesses, it must be creating green jobs and sustainable and inclusive growth. It must not be bailing out outdated, polluting, carbon-intensive industries."



THE PEOPLE BEHIND

As the UK Government eases the lockdown, *Fleet News* pays tribute to the fleets and key workers who stepped up during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to help save lives and keep the country running. These progressive essential services companies have implemented new processes at very short notice, and are keen to share their learnings with other business. Over 22 pages, we bring their stories to life and speak to some of the drivers on the front line about their experiences and how they are embracing a new way of working. Reporting by *Sarah Tooze, Matt de Prez* and *Tom Seymour*.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

Sarah Gilding takes us through a typical day keeping the emergency services at operational level, while police inspector Jason Booth and firefighter Ben Dalton explain the impact Covid-19 is having on their working lives [P34](#)

ROYAL MAIL FLEET

Paul Gatti reveals the processes the UK's biggest fleet operator has put in place, while postal worker Andrew Philips explains the changes to his daily routine [P38](#)

LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE

How Justin Wand is handling significant challenges with logistics, vehicle preparation, supply and maintenance at the UK epicentre of the pandemic [P42](#)

JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

Justin Laney is still able to progress his major fleet projects, while his mothballed fleet is helping the Waitrose home delivery business to cope with high demand [P46](#)

GATESHEAD COUNCIL

Graham Telfer believes local authorities have 'stood up to the test' by ensuring vital services have been maintained, and refuse collection driver Tony Robinson tells how his crew is overcoming the restrictions imposed by social distancing [P48](#)



OUR FRONTLINE FLEETS

The Government's list of essential workers in the Covid-19 pandemic reads like a Who's Who in fleet. Police, fire and ambulance services? Tick. Postal services? Tick. Delivery companies? Tick. Telecommunications? Tick. Utilities? Tick. Local authorities? Tick.

These organisations (and many more) have played a vital part in the fight against Covid-19. While the doctors, nurses and paramedics have been risking their lives, treating patients, fleet decision-makers have been quietly working away in the background.

They and their teams have been keeping the vehicles on the road that we rely on – the ambulances, the fire engines, the police vehicles, the vans delivering food, parcels, medication and more to our doors, the refuse trucks, the vehicles that go out when there is a power cut or a flood or a gas leak. They have been helping to keep the country running.

They deserve a 'thank you'. A (virtual) pat on the back. A round of applause, even.

So, in this special feature (and ones in future issues), we aim to do that. We highlight what

life has been like for those fleet managers, their drivers and emergency services staff. These were all, understandably, busy, but took the time to share their experiences and give other fleet managers some ideas about how to operate safely in the strange times we find ourselves in.

In a world where, as John Gorton, head of transport at Kent and Essex Police, puts it, "the vehicle is a transmitter"; where:

- Simply handing over a set of car keys presents a risk.
- Initiatives that have brought efficiencies to fleets, like van sharing, have had to be dropped and new ways of working found.
- Communication and staff morale has, arguably, never been more important.

TEST OF RESILIENCE

Covid-19 has been a true test of resilience, even for public sector organisations who plan for emergency situations like pandemics.

When Covid-19 hit, the police service put its contingency plans into action (essentially a command structure whereby a chief officer

oversees every aspect) but plans have to be continually adjusted as the situation evolves.

As Gorton points out: "No matter how good your planning is, it never survives contact with the 'enemy'. You always end up having to adapt."

Frontline fleets have had to:

- Create protocols for cleaning vehicles, offices and workshops.
- Introduce social distancing measures.
- Source personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Review MOT, maintenance and servicing schedules.
- Engage with unions.
- Recruit staff or partner with other organisations.
- Stock up on bunkered fuel and introduce contactless fuel cards.
- Respond to the latest Government and industry developments.
- Liaise with suppliers.
- Delay tenders.
- Put projects on hold and accelerate others.
- Provide equipment and test new technologies for those working from home.
- Monitor staff absences and have strategies to cover them, and support those who are ill.

thank



FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

■ Find ways to boost staff morale and support their mental health.

The latter has been particularly challenging for one fleet operator who had to recover from the virus himself, deal with the difficulty of losing colleagues to it and keep the fleet running. That is the stark reality of this pandemic.

Another fleet operator described how they were facing a “perfect storm” at the start of lockdown. Auction houses had closed so they couldn’t dispose of vehicles; independent garages and dealerships had closed so they couldn’t maintain or repair vehicles; and staff absences were high. Yet they were providing an essential service and had to keep going.

They, together with industry trade associations, lobbied the Government to get dealerships to re-open for key worker vehicles requiring essential maintenance.

These are unprecedented times. But all the fleet operators we spoke to were effusive in their praise of suppliers and were getting regular updates from them and industry organisations.

Frontline fleets with non-operational vehicles, such as company cars, have faced the same challenges as fleets in lockdown – handling queries about benefit-in-kind tax, drivers wanting to hand keys back, pre-lease rental vehicles being returned, deliveries and collections of new cars being suspended, and ensuring that vehicles

parked up don’t have maintenance problems.

All this has had to be managed alongside ‘normal’ fleet operator tasks such as driving licence checks and reviewing the fleet budget.

QUICK THINKING

Many fleet operators acted quickly at the start of lockdown to minimise impact.

South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, for instance, did vehicle servicing at weekends to ‘get ahead’ (see pages 34-37).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Group Fleet Services cancelled all new car deliveries as it was not able to dispose of old ones.

National Grid was due to take delivery of a number of new vans and its fleet team made the decision to move 25 of them to its head office where it could access them in emergencies.

“It was a wise choice – within 24 hours of that discussion our converter was then on lockdown itself,” says fleet manager Lorna McAtear.

For some fleets on the frontline of the Covid-19 pandemic, work has increased considerably. Take the London Ambulance Service, which has been at the epicentre of the virus outbreak (see pages 42-44). Its teams had to work 72-hour shifts to get vehicles ready for the opening of the emergency Nightingale Hospital at the Excel Conference Centre.

Royal Mail, meanwhile, has experienced a drop in letters, but a huge uplift in parcels since lockdown began (see pages 38-40).

The Government may be gradually easing restrictions (at the time of writing) but with many retailers set to be closed until June, at the earliest, online shopping will remain ‘the norm’ for some time to come.

MEDICAL VULNERABILITIES

Well Pharmacy, the UK’s third largest pharmacy chain, has experienced a different workload challenge. When the lockdown started, many drivers needed to self-isolate due to age or medical vulnerabilities. Initially, it started a volunteering scheme internally to try to fill the gap but then embarked on a recruitment drive. It received more than 7,000 applications – compared with its normal 20-35 applications for driver roles.

It has taken on 45 drivers, with another 20 in process, and fleet manager David Sharples says it has been challenging getting them into the business and fully trained, within days.

However, internal departments and Well’s fleet suppliers “made this process easier”. DriveTech, for instance, carried out driving licence checks instantly with the DVLA as part of the screening process.

Well’s lease provider, Lex Autolease, has set-up a critical workers helpline. This “ensures our

“THE VEHICLE IS A READY TRANSMITTER OF THE VIRUS”

Making vehicles safe is a priority for fleets, particularly when they have multiple users, such as pool cars, or police cars.

“The challenge is to recognise that the vehicle is effectively a fomite – a ready transmitter of viruses and pathogens,” says John Gorton, head of transport at Kent and Essex Police, and chair-elect of the National Association of Police Fleet Managers.

“Covid-19 is believed to last up to 72 hours on plastic and vehicles are full of plastic – the steering wheel, handbrake etc. so one of the things we’ve been very careful to do is make sure we’ve got standard operating practices between the change of driver. So, there are processes in place where the entire interior

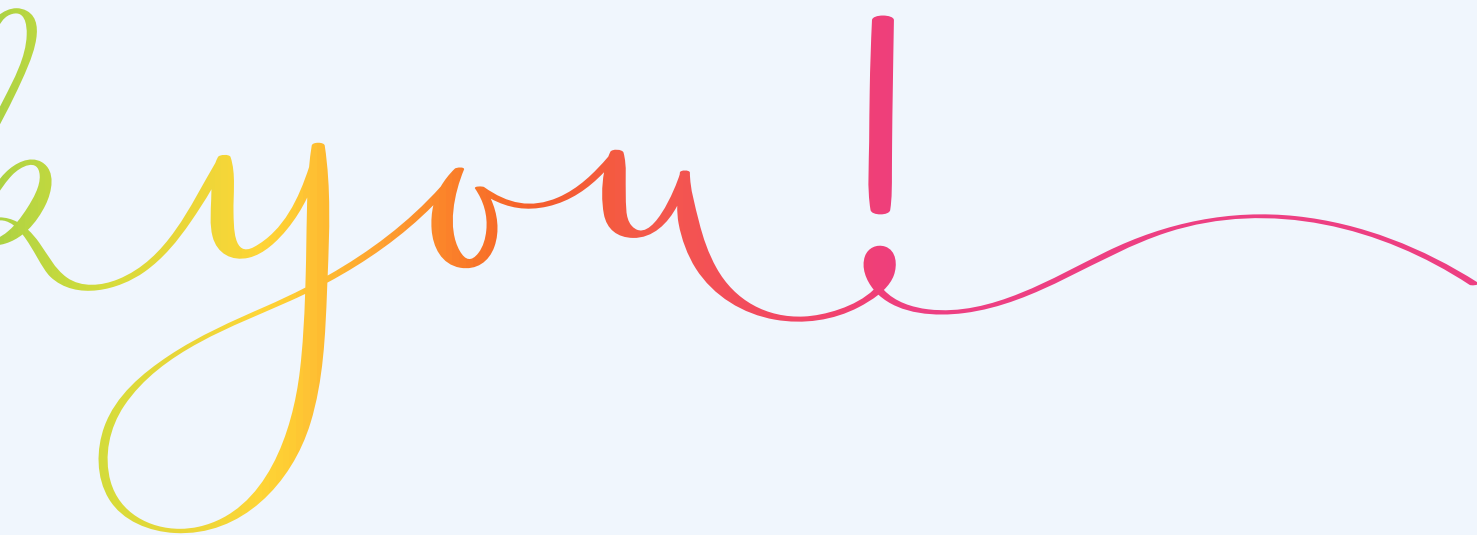
of the vehicle can be wiped down and sanitised as far as possible, making sure that when you’re doing that, you’re wearing gloves. Remember that when logbooks, car keys and fobs are handed from one individual to another there is an opportunity to transfer the virus.”

Gorton has avoided fitting seat covers as “we don’t want to restrict the deployment of any safety devices like car seat airbags” and there are similar concerns from fleets about fitting Perspex screens in vehicles.

Addison Lee has highlighted concerns about taxi drivers installing home-made partitions. It is implementing a single, tested model in each of its vehicles which adheres to International Safety Standards.

It is also providing drivers with protective equipment such as masks, gloves and hand sanitiser and disinfectant to wipe down vehicles after each journey, cleaning vehicles with an electrostatic spray for a deep antimicrobial clean, facilitating social distancing by using the rear seats of its seven-seater vehicles and asking people to only travel with members of their household and to avoid using front seats.

Fleet operators could also consider using third party suppliers to clean their vehicles, particularly in the event of a driver being found to have Covid-19. The London Ambulance Service, for instance, is using Interserve (see pages 42-44).



essential workers have the ways and means to maintain their vehicle, so it is fit for purpose", Sharples says.

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, which make up the majority of Well's fleet, and TrustFord also offered their demonstrator fleets should it need to boost vehicles numbers, and Wilko offered staff and vehicles to help with pharmacy deliveries.

"It's great to see everyone working together for the greater good," Sharples says.

For British Gas, the lockdown has actually caused its engineers' workloads to reduce considerably as it is only attending priority, vulnerable customers and emergency work where customers are without heating or hot water or where domestic equipment, such as cookers and fridges, are not working.

This has meant each engineer is now attending two to three jobs a day compared with six to eight prior to the coronavirus crisis.

"We call customers prior to attending to let them know what we will be doing and what we expect from them – they should always be in a different room to where we are working," says head of fleet Steve Winter.

"We are following the Government guidelines for working in customers' homes and the required PPE so gloves, face masks and coveralls. Use of this depends on whether the customer is self-isolating or vulnerable."

Engineers already had this type of PPE, but Winter acknowledges that the supply chain has had to "work hard" to continue to keep engineers well-equipped.

"This has been a struggle, as I am sure we are

all finding," he says. "But we must give priority to the brilliant NHS at this time."

SUPPORTING CHARITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The reduced workload – as well as a huge drop in pump prices – has meant the fleet's fuel spend has fallen, and there has been a significant reduction in breakdown rates.

However, all vehicles are still being used to some extent as British Gas is one of five businesses (alongside Sainsbury's, The Entertainer, Palletforce and XPO Logistics) supporting the Trussell Trust and its network of food banks across the UK.

"We have more than 3,000 staff volunteering to help in their local communities and we are now delivering food parcels to the more needy," Winter says.

"We must thank our suppliers, Hitachi Capital Vehicle Solutions, Volkswagen, Vauxhall and Engineius vehicle movements. These companies have supported us with 50 large vans – some demo vans and some that were waiting to go to auction. These are now working, collecting food from the 20 distribution hubs around the UK and delivering to the food banks.

"The food is then sorted and our smaller vans and an army of our engineers then deliver out to the homes around the UK."

To date, 1,000 tonnes of food has been delivered, meaning approximately two million meals.

This is just one example of fleet operators, drivers and suppliers supporting their local communities and charities during the crisis.

At the London Borough of Hackney, buildings

maintenance has had to stop due to the difficulties of tradespeople entering domestic homes and trouble obtaining parts and materials "but rather than furlough these employees we have used the resource to support community programmes such as collecting and delivering food to vulnerable residents", says corporate fleet manager Norman Harding.

It's a similar story at Gateshead Council where staff are delivering PPE and supporting schools (see pages 48-49).

Defra has also been helping local authorities to deliver medicines or food.

Many more examples of the fleet industry providing support can be found on our dedicated page, fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19

MAINTAINING CORE SERVICES

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, both Defra and the Environment Agency have a full incident management structure in place, and fleet has established its own incident management team to maintain its core services.

Dale Eynon, director at Defra Group Fleet Services, says: "This cell deals with keeping the assets on the road, managing supply chains, and working with the end users to ensure continuity of service."

Around 75% of the fleet is operational, namely vehicles and plant that are part of Defra's critical incident response or are related to protecting the health and safety of the workforce or others.

Some vehicles are on standby and will be used as required. Responding to an incident or maintaining critical infrastructure (such as trash →

STAFF WELLBEING

Fleet operators are conscious that their drivers, workshop staff and other fleet team members may be feeling anxious, suffering from fatigue or feeling lonely and missing 'office chat' if they are working remotely.

Royal Mail fleet has been keeping track of how staff feel by asking them to give scores for tiredness and morale during team meetings so they know who may require extra support (see pages 38-40).

At South Yorkshire Police, staff have access to an app which includes hints and tips for wellbeing and mindfulness techniques (see pages 34-37).

Meanwhile, the fleet team at National Grid has a daily Webex call, with work discussion banned, to "help lift spirits" and "have a bit of banter and humour to help relieve the impact of lockdown", says fleet manager Lorna McAtear.

PRaise FROM THE GOVERNMENT

The Government has echoed praise from *Fleet News* in recognising frontline fleets for their hard work.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma says: "We want to pay tribute to all those who are working to keep our economy going."

"Across the UK, fleets of vehicles are delivering essential goods, boosting the resilience of the nation during these challenging times. We recognise those efforts and say thank you."



FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH COVID-19 NEWS AND GUIDANCE

■ For the latest fleet guidance on Covid-19, visit www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19-advice

■ For answers to questions from our Covid-19 webinar, visit www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidquestions

■ For the latest fleet-specific Covid-19 news, visit www.fleetnews.co.uk/tag/coronavirus-covid-19

■ The BVRLA has produced a guide to operating during the pandemic, see www.fleetnews.co.uk/covidbvrla

■ Driving for Better Business and Fleet Check have produced a series of video guides and other resources, see www.drivingforbetter-business.com/covid-19/

■ screens, which collect debris on rivers) often now requires two vehicles so employees don't travel together.

Vehicles that are not in use are started up at least once a week to make sure they have full batteries etc. Drivers are also undertaking risk assessments/inspections to ensure they are safe to use. Where they require maintenance, this is booked in with Defra's service provider, Rivus.

Like many fleet operators, Defra has moved MOT and servicing for non-critical assets and increased service intervals for its O-licence heavy goods vehicles.

KEEPING WORKSHOPS SAFE AND OPERATIONAL

Frontline fleets who carry out maintenance in-house have introduced methods for cleaning vehicles, tools and the workshop itself and installed sanitisation stations, reminding staff of the importance of keeping their hands clean.

They have introduced social distancing measures, such as markings on the floor to stay two metres apart, flexible start times and staggered breaks, and are limiting how many technicians work on vehicles. In circumstances where that isn't possible, they use PPE. Other measures limit how many people enter a workshop.

Gorton says: "We've almost quarantined our own workshops because I've got 35 technicians and if some of them were to fall ill that would have a direct impact on frontline policing."

"We don't let police officers in. We don't let the parts delivery people enter the workshop – they leave parts at a certain location, we come out and if we think there is a need we'll spray those parts and sanitise them before bringing them in."

Gorton has also split his biggest workshop team into two, which don't mix to "restrict opportunity of cross contamination".

As chair-elect of the National Association of Police Fleet Managers (NAPFM) he has been in

touch with other forces and says that some have opted to put their staff on a four-days on, four-days off rota, including weekends.

Some forces have been fortunate enough to have had some additional stock holding as part of contingency planning for Brexit.

"We've been able to use that; that's a fortunate double-up," Gorton says.

However, the national vehicle tender, which the NAPFM manages on behalf of the majority of the UK forces, has been put on hold as manufacturers have been unable to respond.

"I've suspended the tender for three months to make sure it's a fair and open process. I'll be reviewing it on a monthly basis," Gorton says.

Police forces, and other fleet operators, also have the challenge of vehicles being stuck at converters or body repair shops.

"It's going to be interesting when lockdown ends because there are a fair few of us with vehicles in part-build that have just been suspended because our external contractors are on lockdown," Gorton says.

"We've got vehicles that are out at vehicle body repair shops following serious accident damage and they've been locked down so there is a lot of catching up to do."

National Grid has about 250 vehicles stuck at its build centre that cannot be worked on.

Similarly, British Gas has vehicles in build at its commissioning centre. However, it has been able to issue some vans that were built prior to lockdown to its engineers.

It has plans in place to catch up with maintenance and van replacements when providers can return to 'normal'.

"We are pre-booking work, combining MOT and service much more to minimise downtime. As we have extended MOT and service intervals, we are able to combine much more easily and this will help to reduce SMR overspend," Winter

says. "We will not be using collection and delivery as much as we will be placing some surplus vans around the repair network, allowing drivers to drop their van at the repairer and collect the spare and carry on with work. This keeps engineers mobile."

LONG-TERM IMPACT OF COVID-19

In the long-term, fleet operators expect there to be less need to travel for face-to-face meetings as video conferencing has worked well for staff meetings and keeping in touch with suppliers.

Staff currently working from home may wish this to continue beyond lockdown and expect flexible hours.

Fewer miles could mean fewer cars or different ways of funding them with potentially more interest in flexible contracts.

Telematics will play a greater role in determining vehicle utilisation and will be increasingly important in helping organisations find savings in the wake of the financial pressures many will be facing.

But businesses will still be grappling with the big issue of the environmental impact of their fleet and the move to electric vehicles (EVs).

Winter says: "We are still working on our plans for a large EV fleet and we have surveyed our engineers and found more than 1,000 that want an EV and have off-street parking so we are also using this time (lockdown) to carry out virtual surveys on their houses to confirm their suitability for an EV."

And a note of positivity from Eynon: "As well as all the terrible sadness about the loss of life that has occurred in this pandemic, I always like to reflect on the positive challenges and opportunities that have come from this experience, and believe the fleet industry will emerge a stronger, more vibrant service that can make better use of technology to deliver its services."



PROUD TO SUPPORT BRITAIN'S FRONTLINE.

NORTHGATE
for all vankind



Throughout the Covid emergency all of our branches have remained open. A big thank you to all the dedicated colleagues who make this possible. Their commitment has allowed us to provide thousands of vans to support customers who are providing frontline services all across the UK.

In addition to providing extra vehicles to customers with increased demand we have continued to support the many thousands of vehicles on hire with customers, throughout this period, from our in-house dedicated workshop facilities.

Northgate's 55 branches have remained safely open to support existing and new customers and their fleets throughout the health emergency. We have conducted strict H&S and risk assessments to ensure we are adhering to the latest Government guidelines and we provide a contactless vehicle delivery and collection service.

Together, Northgate team members and its customers are helping Britain to heal, every day.

Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Northgate has been supporting the commercial vehicle needs of British businesses, the public sector and charities for

more than 30 years. We have supported our customers throughout this emergency every step of the way. As the country re-emerges into a changed world, Northgate will be there meeting tomorrow's needs, too.



Neil McCrossan,
sales & marketing
director, Northgate

Futureproof your fleet with Northgate's innovation, dependability and agility

How people interact and do business has changed through this health emergency. Recognising the needs and desires of our customers continuing to do business, safely, we have rolled out a suite of online meeting capabilities. These allow the Northgate team to conduct highly effective online meetings with new and existing customers in a secure online environment. So, whether you are an existing customer or want to know more about how Northgate can help your business, we are here ready and able to engage safely and securely in delivering your LCV solution.

We believe commercial vehicles should enable businesses to do what they do best, rather than become a drain on financial resources and fleet managers' time. Northgate is the leader in providing a wide range of flexible vehicle provision options supported by a range of market leading fleet management services. Northgate customers benefit from services and agility not possible to those who buy, or contract hire their fleets. In uncertain times Northgate customers know they can rely on our dependability and flexibility.

NORTHGATE
Vehicle Hire

Find out more at northgatevehiclehire.co.uk
or call Northgate on 0330 042 0903



FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE

SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

'We've been tested to our limits'

Sarah Gilding, head of joint vehicle fleet management at South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, shares how staff have responded to the Covid-19 crisis as she outlines a day in the life of her fleet operation during the April peak. As told to [Sarah Tooze](#).

8AM: ARRIVE AT OFFICE

I have been coming into the office every day throughout the crisis. We have three workshops – two in Rotherham and one in Chapel-town, near Sheffield, where I am based – and I can't expect my workshop staff to come in and fix vehicles while I'm at home. It would send completely the wrong message. And I want to make sure the team is okay.

So my deputy Jo (Buckley) and I are in. But we don't put ourselves or others at risk. We have separate offices and the first thing we do when we enter the building is to use a hand sanitiser which lasts 24 hours. We also wipe down our workstations. The cleaners have also been busy wiping down touchpoints.

Some administration staff, who are vulnerable, are working from home. They keep in touch through Skype and that makes a real difference, rather than people being totally isolated; they still feel part of the team.

8.15AM: CHECK ACCIDENT REPORT

I have to keep a daily eye on accidents and any write-offs because it could leave us short of vehicles. We had 25 beat vehicles and seven high performance vehicles on order prior to this crisis. They're now stuck in those manufacturing plants with no indication as to when they will come. We will be considering any stock vehicles that may become available, provided they're tested for police use, so we've got a pool to use.

The coronavirus crisis has affected the national police tender for vehicles. That should have closed at the end of March but that's been on hold because the manufacturers couldn't respond. It's going to take some time to get back to normal throughput so we may have to keep vehicles on longer than we would have done. We typically keep beat vehicles for five years/150,000 miles and high performance vehicles for four years/ 150,000 miles but we do always get a percentage of write-offs and we thought we'd successfully planned for that.

We had forward planned six months into the year with the order for 32 vehicles, but this has thrown it out.

8.30AM: CONTACT SUPPLIERS

In light of the vehicle supply shortage I am keeping a close eye on manufacturer emails. BMW, for example, is constantly updating us via email and I am speaking to them two or three times a week.

We're getting updates from our tyre provider, updates from other parts companies on what they have and haven't got in place, and checking which dealers are open or closed. I have to check every day where everybody is at because the situation today could be completely different tomorrow.

We increased our parts supply in the early days to take account of this and the same with fuel. We have a national contract with Allstar as well as our own bunkered fuel. BP has offered free fuel for emergency services through the Allstar cards so we fed that out to all the teams and told them where the BP locations were and said go there first so we could maintain our own stocks. There's a potential saving there for us so we're tracking that as well.

There are a lot of emails coming in from different suppliers, ones we've not used, too. Just to say 'perhaps we can help with this, please pass our details on' so there's been a lot of support.

9.30AM: SPEAK TO WORKSHOP MANAGERS

Myself or Jo ring the managers at the Rotherham workshops at least once a day as well as checking on the workshop here. We were in the middle of merging the two sites at Rotherham to create an HGV workshop and bodyshop facility (www.fleetnews.co.uk/syorks) but we've had to stop contractors working on that and put that on hold.

A lot of proactive things have stopped. We would have been progressing telematics for

the fire service vehicles, for example, and we would have been doing a lot more proactive work in terms of getting the data out to districts and departments and trying to make savings. Things like that have gone on hold because everybody is consumed with coping day-to-day on the basics.

We continue with routine vehicle servicing. We have nominated people to clean everything at the start and end of the day, and every time vehicles are swapped over. We've got a designated cleaning station and cleaning kit for every vehicle with protective equipment in.

Workshop staff, such as technicians and store keepers that are dealing with parts, are also wearing gloves and masks.

We've tried to reduce how often more than one person works on a vehicle but there are still times where one may need another's help which is why we've gone with the masks so they've got that added protection. When they can just stay in their own workstation environment on a ramp they are doing that.

We've introduced other distancing measures. For instance, officers no longer drive into the back of the compound, we're asking them to wait outside the front of the building, and we've changed meal breaks so there are not as many people having breaks at the same time.

We have a plan should workshop staffing levels reduce. We would prioritise which vehicles are serviced, ensuring we service the ones doing the high speeds and those that have the risks first. Those that aren't used for responding, that are doing day-to-day enquiries or day-to-day deliveries, would be pushed lower down.

We have also done some weekend servicing to get ahead of the game in case we do have a reduction in staffing. We put people on notice to do overtime while they're well.

The fire service has continued to do mobile servicing of vehicles and appliances.

Their work has shifted in terms of response



Factfile

ORGANISATION: South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR)

HEAD OF JOINT VEHICLE FLEET

MANAGEMENT: Sarah Gilding

FLEET SIZE: SYP = 715 (559 cars, 138 vans, 18 motorcycles); SYFR = 201 (80 cars, 70 vans, 46 HGVs, five other)

NUMBER OF STAFF: 54 posts in total of which 41 are from the police service, 13 from the fire service. Of the 54, there are six HGV mechanics, two equipment technicians, five body repairers, two auto electricians, nine mechanical technicians. The remaining roles are management/supervisors, admin, storekeepers and drivers.

REPLACEMENT CYCLE: Cars – five years; vans – up to seven years

FUNDING METHOD: Outright purchase

to fire. They're doing more work with the police and the NHS to assist with Covid-19, delivering PPE to people. They've stopped their routine things like house calls.

The focus of work for our drivers has changed. Normally, they would be doing a daily post run, we've cut that down to three times a week. Or they would be moving witnesses about – there's none of that because of social distancing. The courts are closing so the movement of files and things isn't as urgent.

The ad-hoc jobs for them are now mainly Covid-related such as delivering laptops and getting PPE out to people.

10.30AM: CHECK COVID-19 UPDATES

We set up a central Covid-19 team at the beginning of March to deal with contingency planning and it sends daily updates to all staff such as where we are at with PPE, staff being off and where we are in the peak.

As a police force and fire and rescue service, we have business continuity plans and we carry out exercises to try to test for situations like this. I've sat in those exercises and thought 'well, this will never happen, will it?'. And this is beyond any expectation.

We've certainly been tested to the limits in terms of technology and resilience.

In the early days there was a lot of activity looking at HR policies, how we could work differently, getting laptops to people who needed to work from home but didn't have them. The IT element really had to step up.

A lot of departments were looking where to get PPE from. We, in fleet, did come across a supplier that could supply masks and hand sanitiser so we ordered some from them and we fed that into the central team as well.

When that arrived you could see the difference in staff because they'd been very anxious prior to that and the anxiety was building because they knew we needed them to come in but they felt vulnerable. We now have a ➔



FRONTLINE FLEETS: A DAY IN THE LIFE



Regional procurement team which has been nominated to source PPE.

That's delivered to a central location and then distributed. It comes into the Covid-19 team and then gets handed out in terms of priority, looking at the staff still having to work with the public and those most at risk.

Staff receive Covid-19 updates via email, our dedicated intranet site and through notifications on an app called Backup Buddy, which is mental health app for police and can be customised by each force.

It has hints and tips for wellbeing and mindfulness techniques.

11AM: DAILY BUSINESS CONFERENCE CALLS

I still having 'business-as-usual' type meetings with department heads from the fire service and the police, either using Skype or Zoom.

1PM: 'GOLD' CONFERENCE CALL

Once a week we have a 'gold' conference call to discuss Covid-19. It is led by the assistant chief constable with heads of departments and district commanders participating.

We have analysts looking at the absence figures and how things are doing nationally and they feed that into these meetings.

We have to plan for how we would cope if we lost 10%, 30% or 50% of our staff.

We have had some people self-isolating but they've returned in fleet so we're in a good position at the moment. It's a similar picture across the organisation I would say with people being off and then returning.

We are also now able to test up to 50 police staff a day at the testing station which has just been set up at Doncaster airport so we can get them back to work quicker, provided they test negative.

2.30PM: FINANCE CONFERENCE CALL

I speak with police finance staff on a regular basis to discuss the fleet budget. We have already done a lot of cost-cutting over the

years and I expect there will be further budget constraints as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

3PM: 'SILVER' CONFERENCE CALL

In addition to the 'gold' conference call we have a 'silver' conference call, which takes place once a day. It's led by a superintendent who is responsible for the ops planning team and traffic.

I tend to feed into the gold and silver calls and Jo will do silver when I can't. Typically, the silver calls are attended by the deputies of the people in the gold group. We'll feed in things like vehicle supply issues.

We also have a 'bronze' conference call to discuss things like stock levels of PPE which Jo feeds into.

4PM: SPEAK TO LOCAL FORCES

We have been in contact with local forces if we need anything, although there is probably less contact than before the coronavirus crisis because everyone is focused on getting their own teams through this. The regional meetings between police fleet managers have stopped.

4.30PM: HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE CALL

I have regular conference calls with health and safety representatives to discuss things like risk assessments.

5PM: LEAVE OFFICE

Although I am working 'normal' hours, the Covid-19 team members have my contact details for call-outs should they need me.

The workshop also closes at 5pm, although they will do overtime if required.

I'm really proud of people's commitment. The staff have really stepped up and there is a good team spirit that we're all in it together.

You have to remain calm and look on the positive side and encourage people to keep going.

INSPECTOR JASON BOOTH,
SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE



BEN DALTON,
FIREFIGHTER, SOUTH
YORKSHIRE FIRE AND
RESCUE





FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

Road officers at South Yorkshire Police are as busy as ever, despite the volume of traffic falling due to the lockdown. However, with fewer drivers on the road, it makes it easier to spot those who are up to no good, according to inspector Jason Booth.

"Our role is quite dynamic, we're responding to anything that comes in on the radio such as collisions or vehicles that have been stolen, burglaries and other crimes at night, as well as looking after the road network," he says. "We did that before and we're still doing that now."

Contrary to some media reporting, the police are not patrolling the roads looking specifically for breaches of the Covid-19 regulations, but it is inevitable that they frequently come across them during the course of their daily work.

"We had a motorist from a neighbouring county saying they were going 'to view a kitchen' - at 11 o'clock at night," says Booth. "We had another motorist driving more than 35 miles to deliver a letter instead of using a stamp. We've had people driving out to buy some cannabis. We've had people say they were 'out to buy a KFC' despite the fact they were all closed. These are just a few examples!"

He adds: "Those are not valid reasons for being out and we have taken some positive action (i.e. fines). But, everything we do is proportionate; it's not a numbers game. It's

about supporting the local communities and the Government message.

"We have also been operating 'educational' stop sites across the force each afternoon. Here, we engage with motorists about the Government guidance around lockdown."

Officers are aware key workers and commercial vehicles need to be allowed through quickly. Social distancing is adhered to for all conversations with motorists, which are intended to ensure they are out for the right reasons.

No prosecutions take place at these educational sites; they are not designed to catch people out, simply to educate and inform.

Social distancing measures have also changed the way the police interact.

"We no longer have a team briefing sat in the same room. In the main, we brief at the start of the shift via Skype with staff in cars, dialing in via laptops," Booth says.

"It's quite alien because the team briefing is an integral part of our day and is good for team building, but we need these measures to protect each other and protect the department.

"When we do go into the office, we enter the building one way and leave another. We use hand sanitiser and take our temperature when we enter to make sure we're not bringing people into the work environment who may potentially have symptoms of Covid-19 and pass it on to others.

"We have social distancing within the office, and we wipe down the office very regularly with special cleaning solutions."

Cleaning measures have also been implemented for the cars, where officers usually work as a single crew.

"We've had to take car cleaning to the next level. We are using special cleaners at the start and end of every shift. It's about minimising any opportunities to pass anything on to the next person that uses that vehicle," Booth explains.

"All our cars have PPE (gowns, gloves, goggles, paper mask, biohazard bag and sanitiser on board), each officer has individual hand gel and a full face mask, as required, and all staff are used to carrying gloves due to the nature of our job."

Should they transport anyone suspected of having Covid-19, officers have access to vans and have set up a dedicated custody suite.

"Despite the difficult circumstance, team morale is generally good, and we all appreciate this is national situation and we need to support each other while doing our job and making our a contribution to keeping the roads and people of South Yorkshire safe," says Booth.

"We continue to have some really good success, and this translates into a boost for morale. We are also active on social media, promoting the work we do, and the public's supportive comments are a real boost."

South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue has been working hard to support the fight against Covid-19, with a range of actions that assist other emergency services and the wider community.

Firefighter Ben Dalton explains: "We've been training up staff to drive ambulances, we've been delivering food parcels, prescriptions and PPE, we've been testing face masks for doctors at Doncaster Royal Infirmary, we've been ringing up vulnerable people for a welfare chat to make sure they're OK for essentials, and we've been supporting the NHS 'clap for carers'."

He adds: "We try not to affect our operational response by sending operational fire engines, so the things I've mentioned have been done by drivers on their day off or by civilian staff."

Dalton has himself helped ambulance services to gain access to premises where someone is suspected of having coronavirus.

"If the ambulance service turns up at a house and somebody isn't answering, but you can see them the other side of the door, they've collapsed, we'll gain access by drilling the lock so the ambulance service can get in," he says.

"If we do have to go into the property to open the lock we're wearing our personal issue respirator and goggles and we are thoroughly decontaminated afterwards. We have a spray which we can put on our uniform which cleans it within 15 minutes.

"We're spending about three hours of our 11-hour shifts cleaning so at the start and end of each shift we do a thorough clean of the fire engine, the fire appliance equipment and the station. We're also cleaning when we turn back to the station from call-outs. You can't be too careful with something like this."

Social distancing has changed the service's daily routines, including working practices and leisure times.

"When we all line up at the beginning of the shift to be detailed our duties for the day, we're spaced two metres apart instead of being stood side-by-side and when we're having lunch we make sure we're spaced apart," Dalton says.

"We're staggering how many people go into the gym at one time - normally we go in as a crew and train together but we're limiting it to three or four people - and we're cleaning all the equipment. It's good that the fire service has allowed us to train because it's important we maintain our physical fitness to be able to carry out the role appropriately and it helps with mental wellbeing.

"When we've been to the gym and checked our equipment, we normally do some operational training, which we call drilling, for the job so we practice different scenarios such as responding to road traffic collisions or search and rescue, and putting up ladders. There are certain limitations now as to what we can do, we try not to get within two metres, so we're

doing less drilling provided we're 'in date' for certain competencies."

Generally, each engine accommodates four firefighters during a call out: a driver and an officer in charge in the front and two breathing apparatus-wearers in the back, with plenty of space to sit apart.

However, the amount and type of call-outs have changed slightly, with an increase in 'nuisance' fires and a reduction in road traffic collisions as the number of cars on the road has dropped.

Dalton adds: "But I've noticed that drivers are a lot more complacent - they're not indicating as much or looking when they pull out - as the roads have been quieter. I've found pedestrians are in a similar mindset when they're stepping out onto the road. I've also seen drivers treating the road as a race track!"

"I've not had to attend a road traffic collision since the outbreak but the protocol is to have the minimum amount of people close to each other working on the car. Unfortunately, there are some scenarios where you need more than one. For example, when you're extricating a casualty from the car you need more than one person to physically remove the casualty and then we'll wear goggles and a respirator. But we're trying, where possible, to minimise the amount of people around a vehicle.

"We're all trying to be positive and support each other and get on with what needs doing."



ROYAL MAIL FLEET

'If someone is feeling low, we make sure we rally round'

With an uplift in parcels as consumers turn to online shopping during the coronavirus lockdown and a shift from van sharing to one person/one van, Royal Mail's fleet director Paul Gatti explains how he and his team have adapted to support the operation and keep staff safe. As told to [Sarah Tooze](#).

9AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH WORKSHOP TEAM

I have been working from home since this all began and my day is spent making and taking conference calls. Every morning I have a call with the workshop team, which is led by Sally (Warren), my head of maintenance.

Everyone gives a score out of 10 for tiredness and a score out of 10 for morale. As you can imagine, it ebbs and flows dependent on the day, but it's always good to keep a record of those numbers. If someone is feeling low, we make sure we rally round and they get a few calls of support during that day from Sally and myself.

During the conference call, each workshop manager talks about coronavirus-related absences. We have 110 workshops and around 1,000 technicians and we need to understand which units are being challenged the most.

We also discuss the changes we have made in the workshops and will refine them if necessary.

We have introduced a lot of additional preventive measures. We maintain strict social distancing rules in all our workshops in line with company policy.

When we get a vehicle in it needs to be cleaned and disinfected before we start working on it. When the keys are handed over they are also cleaned and disinfected before they are hung up. Every tool that is shared needs to be cleaned after use, and even for things like allocating parts from the store-room, we have created a process for social distancing.

In line with the guidance from public health authorities, good hand hygiene is still one of the most important lines of protection, coupled with enforcing a strict two-metre social distancing rule.

We have markers on the floor in our

reception areas to maintain that distance.

We've introduced staggered break times so, whereas before, you might have had six people in a restroom at one time, now you only have two. We've also introduced staggered work times so we don't have everyone arriving at the same time.

Our other key focus, of course, remains making sure the operation has as many vehicles as it needs to manage this busy time.

Our letter volumes have gone down, but parcels have increased significantly so the operation is busier than normal at this time of year.

We have implemented a new policy of one person in a van as part of a range of social distancing preventive measures. Normally, we have two people going out in a van, they stop in a street, both jump out, take some mail, do a loop with that mail, get back in and drive to the next point. But that's not possible with the two-metre rule.

To support the operation we're making greater use of our fleet of mobile technicians allowing us to provide more on-site service rather than the operator having to bring the vehicles back into the workshop.

To ensure that we identify any vehicles in the operation that might have a fault, we carry out a check every day and any faults are highlighted to the manager. This gets relayed to the workshop and then we fix it. We also deploy technicians to carry out walkaround checks of the vehicles that are in the yard.

10AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH MANAGERS ACROSS THE BUSINESS

These are weekly conference calls with managers to talk about what is happening in the organisation in terms of responding to Covid-19. Then there are 'questions from the floor'.

11AM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH MANAGERS FROM FLEET

Every fortnight I lead a call with all the managers from fleet, which is around 120 managers. It's a 'state of the nation' across fleet. I give an overview of what has changed and talk about any challenges.

It's important we talk about how our own business unit is responding to demand because there are a lot of operational calls about processing and moving mail. This call is all about how we best support the operation. It also allows people to raise any questions with the fleet management team.

Some non-operational-facing colleagues are working from home and could feel isolated. We always make sure we point them to the company resources around how to ensure their wellbeing.

But the biggest part of the call is saying 'thank you' for all the hard work and support our people give as we play an important role in keeping the UK connected.

NOON: SUPPLIER UPDATE

We have a spreadsheet with all of our fixed supply chain listed and what the status of each is – either red, amber or green and the latest update we've had from them. Looking at our supply chain now, it's thankfully pretty much 'green' across the board.

It was a different picture a month ago. The immediate response was to close, to scale right back, but we're finding most of our suppliers have got their head round some of the challenges and have started to re-open.

We have appointed a specialist company to clean any vehicles that may have been contaminated on those rare occasions when a driver may be taken ill. So, if a driver has been found to have the coronavirus, that



Factfile

FLEET DIRECTOR: Paul Gatti

FLEET SIZE: 49,068 commercial vehicles
(42,700 vans, 6,368 HGVs)

NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS: 110

FUNDING METHOD: cars – contract hire;
vans and trucks – outright purchase and
finance lease

AVERAGE REPLACEMENT CYCLE:

cars – three years; vans – nine years;
trucks – 10 years

vehicle is quarantined for 72 hours before being given a full clean by the specialist contractor.

1PM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH DIRECT REPORTS

I have a call every day with my direct reports and I also have one-to-ones. My diary is starting to fill up with end-of-year appraisals. I also have a weekly meeting with my boss and his direct reports.

1.30PM: CONFERENCE CALL WITH THE UNION

I touch base with the union that represents the fleet team regularly to get feedback from them about any concerns that may be coming through from people on the ground.

4PM: CONFERENCE CALLS ABOUT PROJECTS

We're deploying a number of 'business as usual' initiatives so I have a weekly touchpoint with my team and the same with the central programme team on what we're doing.

Some projects have been paused while other things have been accelerated.

We've learned a lot from Covid-19 in terms of how you can do things differently. So we're picking up some of those learning points and applying them to other scenarios as we move into the new normal. ➔



FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

ANDREW PHILIPS,
POSTAL WORKER,
ROYAL MAIL



Andrew Philips, a postman based in Kenton, London, has had to adapt to a new way of working having van shared with a colleague for the past eight years.

Instead of collecting mail together from the local office, Philips now travels there alone.

"I go in a bit early, about 6am, to start prepping up both deliveries so we can get it all out and completed within the duty time," he says.

"When I'm ready to leave I call my delivery 'partner' to say I'm on my way and he makes his way to the drop point."

Before Philips leaves the office he carries out his usual vehicle walkaround checks and cleans the van using a sanitiser spray, making sure all the touchpoints such as the door handles, steering wheel and gear knob are cleaned. He also cleans it at the end of the shift in case the van needs to be used by one of the collection drivers.

"We've been given hand sanitisers, masks and gloves to make sure we're properly protected," Philips says.

When he meets his colleague at the drop point they maintain social distancing.

Philips adds: "He works from the drop point. He loads up his trolley, does one loop, comes back to the drop point, loads up again and goes off again whereas I do my deliveries from the

HOPEFULLY,
WE CAN COME
OUT THE OTHER
END SMILING

van. I park it up, do a loop, move the van, do another loop," he says.

Social distancing is being maintained with customers too.

"We're no longer handing over our PDAs (postal digital assistants) to the customer to sign for a delivery," Philips says. "Now we knock on the door, leave the parcel on the door-step, step back, and when the customer opens the door to pick the parcel up we put in a code to confirm it's been delivered, so we're protecting ourselves and the public."

Philips has been a postman for 32 years and has never experienced such major change, but recognises it is a necessity.

"Obviously people's health comes first," he says. "It's a situation where people have to adapt. You've got to try to stay healthy, stay safe."

"We're just carrying on, doing the best we can, and, hopefully, we can get through it and come out the other end smiling."

FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Our partners Baker Labels and Yodel working together here to continue the mission to deliver one million meals to the NHS frontline. Thank you! Salute the NHS (@SaluteNHS) on Twitter.



Huge thanks to British Gas engineers who have been delivering patient monitoring kits for the NHS during the Covid-19 crisis. The packs are being delivered across

Liverpool and contain smartphones, blood pressure meters and pulse oximeters - enabling the NHS to monitor patients. Docobo (DocobUK) on Twitter.

Thank you to all involved in getting this food from Fare Share South West in Bristol to Provide Devon in Plymouth. Special thanks go out to ALD Automotive and Gerry who delivered it for free. We are delighted to partner with this organisation to help distribute more crisis food.

Provide Devon (@providedeven) on Twitter.



Brilliant, thank you Euro Commercial for delivering 600 seat covers to the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Yvonne Carroll on LinkedIn.

Thank you so much to Matt and the team at Lynne's Pantry and City Grab for providing lunch today for Taptown School key workers, it was much appreciated.

Taptown School (TaptownSchool1) on Twitter.



Thank you to local DPD drivers, who recently stopped by to deliver care packages for our staff. These consisted of essentials such as toiletries, drinks and snacks for staff working busy shifts. The delivery

was part of DPD's 'NHS Thursday' - a campaign that sees DPD colleagues collect donations throughout the week and deliver them to hospitals on Thursday. Peterborough City Hospital NHS on Facebook.

Supporting frontline fleets with a safety first approach

Protecting drivers as part of our 'Safety as Standard' promise with a flexible approach to suit your business





'Coronavirus will push us to be more innovative in future'

Justin Wand, director – strategic assets & property at London Ambulance Service (LAS), has faced significant challenges with logistics, vehicle preparation, supply and maintenance across the trust at the UK epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic. As told to *Tom Seymour*

TAM: START WORK FROM HOME OFFICE

I'll check emails, call or video conference colleagues and we're generally in contact on almost an hourly basis throughout the day. The guidance is changing rapidly and we have to respond quickly.

TAM: CHECK OPERATIONAL FITNESS OF THE FLEET

Call demand for ambulances went from 3,500 a day pre-lockdown to 11,500 a day so we had to flex the fleet size rapidly.

Our usual fleet of 1,076 vehicles, including ambulances, light commercial vehicles, rapid response cars and motorbikes had to be scaled up with an additional 176 ambulances in just three weeks to meet the demand necessary due to the coronavirus pandemic.

That 16% increase was made possible by extending end-of-contract vehicles, making sure they were 'battle ready' with full service, MOT, as well as running gear and gearbox overhauls.

We also pulled forward orders for the replacement vehicles, including the preparation of specialist equipment fitting in Ireland and shipping them to London before any border lockdowns were put in place.

You can't just go down the road and hire 176 ambulances like you can some white vans.

Support from Stagecoach and South East Ambulance Service with logistics and donating equipment meant we could have the vehicles we needed ready in time.

We would normally be able to prep new ambulances at a rate of five a week, but this had to increase to 20 a week over a three week period.

We're going to keep these additional 176 vehicles because we can't afford not to have this capacity should a second wave hit later this summer and then into the winter which is always a busy period for us. We'll keep rotating vehicles in use and it's our plan to

“WHATEVER
HAPPENS AFTER
THIS, IT'S GOING TO
CHANGE OUR
WORKING PATTERNS
AND THAT WILL BE
LIBERATING”

make them a national fleet resource in times of crisis like this.

TAM: CHECK WORKSHOP CAPACITY AND JOB SCHEDULES

We have 12 London garages to keep vehicles on the road but we knew we needed more resources and The AA kindly stepped in to help us with 41 patrols and a total of 176 additional mechanics. It meant they could continue working, rather than being furloughed as they may have been due to the drop in demand from the lockdown.

Our internal specialist mechanic teams helped to train The AA teams to make sure they had the technical knowledge necessary to service and repair ambulances to make sure downtime was minimised as much as possible. Some of The AA's teams also cover 24-hour breakdown repair for us and have been helping on site at A&E locations to do roadside repairs when needed to help minimise downtime even further.

As a result, the ambulance fleet is running at between 92-95% operational capacity.

TAM: UPDATE ON VEHICLE DEEP CLEANING

All these vehicles need to be washed, stocked and deep cleaned if they have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected Covid-19 patient.

This additional work means four extra hours of downtime per vehicle and this is even before restocking.

We have teams from supplier Interserve working to disinfect vehicles with anti-static cleaning agents. This is a manual process, but we're currently testing an ultraviolet solution that is unmanned and will hit every surface inside and out of the vehicle. This will rapidly cut our preparation time down from four hours to 35 minutes. It takes just a few minutes to reset.

This will give ourselves and our paramedics much greater assurances of the decontamination process. If we're successful with our testing of this new technology it will be shared with the Department for Transport (DfT) and Public Health England to inform policy for the rest of the vehicle preparation and vehicle logistics industry.

NOON: CHECK IN WITH THE TEAMS

You have to trust people to do what they need to do. We're working and collaborating with pragmatism and our whole lives have been transformed. Can we honestly say that we're going to spend that 20 minute journey for a face-to-face meeting again when we know we can video conference remotely?

Whatever happens after this, it's going to change our working patterns and that will be liberating. It's going to be a challenge for the NHS to navigate how it resets, rather than returning to business as usual. It's going to push us to be more innovative with how we deliver services in the future.

There has been so much variety in what's happening each day. This level of preparedness day in, day out can cause anxiety for the teams and you have to be aware of that.

In order to prepare for the emergency Nightingale Hospital at the ExCeL Conference Centre, the teams were putting in 72-hour shifts to get 16 vehicles prepped in time.



It's absolutely tragic the number of people in the UK and across the NHS that have lost their lives fighting the pandemic and LAS hasn't been untouched by that.

I am working from home, but I'm also still doing face-to-face with the teams where appropriate to give them the chance to ask questions and talk.

We have always taken mental health seriously, so team members have an initial 'hot debrief' after certain jobs with their peers, there will be a welfare check-in after that and then there's also access to occupational health workers.

We've put break rooms in place at A&Es across London where there is access to food and refreshments and it's a place where

teams can take a quiet five minutes if they need it.

3PM: CHECK STOCK LEVELS ACROSS OUR STATIONS

We consolidated our 63 ambulance stations down to 30 to help reduce the logistical burden of stocking that many sites. It means we can concentrate on those specific locations and it's something we will keep going with until at least September. We have also established three new warehouses where we have consolidated our kit supply to restock our vehicles.

As you can imagine, there is a lot going on so the management team at LAS has gone to a seven-day week, with five days on, two days

off. We've also brought in executive support and additional resources from the British Army to help with logistics management and that has been a big help.

4PM: REVIEW PPE OFFERS

In the early days, the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) was somewhat haphazard, but we're now at a level where it's not as much of a challenge. Anyone on the team that wants PPE has access to it.

We're getting a lot of offers to provide us with additional PPE, but the biggest challenge for me has actually been sorting through them to find out what is genuine and what is of the correct standard.

Some are from well-meaning individuals and some are fraudulent, so it's been an unexpected part of the job in recent weeks to make sure we have the right level of supply for paramedics and the teams.

4PM: REVIEW DAILY GOVERNMENT BRIEFING

We're taking our cues just like everyone else from the daily Government briefings and guidance from Public Health England. We're not getting a heads-up ahead of anyone else, so every day we have to think about what has been said and how that will affect the fleet and the teams the following day. Changes in the rules could mean an increase in calls coming in potentially and we have to be ready.

We have to look at the rules that are coming in and then we'll discuss internally to see how we can get that messaging right in plain English out to all the team and paramedics as quickly as possible.

I've always been immensely proud of what I do, but this situation has taught me the true power of working in a team that is connected, collaborative and has been agile to the needs of patients. You have to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Factfile

ORGANISATION: London Ambulance Service

DIRECTOR – STRATEGIC ASSETS &

PROPERTY: Justin Wand

FLEET SIZE: 1,252 (676 ambulances, 140 vans, 200 cars, plus motorcycles and 82 grey fleet)



FRONTLINE FLEETS: CASE STUDIES

JACK BINDER, PARAMEDIC, LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE
TOM BINDER, LEADING FIREFIGHTER, LONDON FIRE BRIGADE



Paramedic Jack Binder (right)
with his firefighter brother Tom

London Ambulance Service paramedic Jack Binder and his London Fire Brigade brother, leading firefighter Tom Binder, have been working together responding to those in need across the capital as part of a new bluelight partnership to help boost the ambulance service's response to Covid-19.

The new partnership across the two emergency services has helped the ambulance service respond to the demands of the Covid-19 crisis with up to 300 staff from London Fire Brigade helping to drive ambulances and

assist medics as directed.

The bluelight brothers are both from Essex and have worked on several shifts together since Tom, 28, started his secondment with the ambulance service a month ago.

Tom says: "I really wanted to help make a difference during this global pandemic and help to take pressure off the ambulance service. After hearing first-hand from Jack and listening to what he does on a day-to-day basis, I didn't want to turn down this chance down."

Jack adds: "It has been great working so closely with Tom and responding to patients

together. Though I'm not sure he enjoys taking instructions from his younger brother!"

"It's a unique experience and I don't think anyone could have predicted this would happen a few months ago."

Growing up, the pair were inseparable. With Jack, at 27, just a year younger than Tom, they often get mistaken for twins at work.

Joining the London emergency services came naturally to the brothers, according to Jack: "Blue lights definitely run in our blood!"

Tom adds: "Our grandparents were both in the Metropolitan Police and our dad is a retired group commander in the Brigade."

"Hearing all the stories and jobs that they would go to, I could see no other career option growing up. It's all I ever wanted to do."

Since being seconded to London Ambulance Service, Tom has responded to a variety of jobs across the capital. He says: "I have been to everything from attending to a new born baby to suspected strokes and cardiac arrest patients."

He has found the training he received as a firefighter in immediate emergency care and incident command has proved really useful and he has been able to easily apply it to his role while working alongside medics.

Jack said: "I'm really proud of my brother. Not just with his willingness to help during this crisis but also with everything he has done at the London Fire Brigade. He often rings me after his shifts and speaks with so much enthusiasm for everything he is doing at London Ambulance Service."

The partnership has been a great learning experience for both the medics and the firefighters involved and has helped the ambulance service continue to respond to the most seriously ill and injured patients during the peak of the pandemic.

Tom said: "Bluelight services have always had a good working relationship. This partnership is only going to make things even better."

FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Let's give a HUGE #Thumbs Up for Your Postie and show them how much we appreciate all their hard work.

By dressing up they are cheering up our local community while providing such an important service AND raising money for Musgrove Park! Thank you!
Coronavirus Community Help Taunton on Twitter.

Thank you, Land Rover, for all your incredible support to the British Red Cross and many other frontline agencies fighting Covid-19. Respect to all of you key workers at this time and thank you for going above and beyond for us all!
Bear Grylls (@Bear Grylls) on Twitter.



Absolutely great partnership and support from our friends at JLR. Playing their part supporting Covid-19 new activities with essential deliveries in our communities.
Lee Baker (Lee_BakerFRS) on Twitter.



FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

6th -7th October 2020. Hall 20, NEC

The UK's leading event for the
fleet and mobility community

REGISTER
— YOUR —
INTEREST
NOW

fleetandmobilitylive.com

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

COVID-19 Notice: Bauer Consumer Media/Fleet & Mobility Live are continuing to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and will follow government advice. At this moment in time, we feel that the timing of Fleet & Mobility Live will offer the perfect opportunity to bring the industry back together after such exceptional times. We will ensure additional safety measures are in place to ensure strict hygiene standards are maintained throughout the event. Should you have any concerns about attending or exhibiting, please contact the events team - events@fleetandmobilitylive.com





JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

'Everything that will turn a wheel is working now'

Justin Laney, general manager – fleet at John Lewis Partnership, reveals the impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on JLP. Here, he offers an insight into a typical day in the life of his fleet operation. As told to *Matt de Prez*

7AM: START WORK

Since the start of the lockdown I've been working from home and one of the biggest changes for me is that I'm getting a lot more sleep! I used to get up at 5.30am to drive to Bracknell, which is about 45 miles from my house.

Now, I get an extra hour in bed before I make my way to my study. The start to my day is certainly a lot easier than it used to be.

As always, a check on emails is first thing on my agenda.

7.15AM: CHECK DOWNTIME REPORT

I always look at the downtime report at the start of the day. We have a live downtime tracker that shows what proportion of the fleet is off the road at any location.

The John Lewis Partnership is formed of Waitrose, which is very busy at the moment, and John Lewis, which is certainly much quieter as the shops are closed.

The Waitrose home delivery fleet is absolutely stuck at the moment, as are the trucks that deliver stock to the branches.

Everything that will turn a wheel is working right now within the Waitrose home delivery fleet. If we are short of vehicles in one area, we have a spare vehicle fleet that can be deployed where needed. We also have a 'mothballed fleet' of decommissioned vehicles that we can put back into service pretty quickly. That is how we usually get through peak times such as Christmas and it allows us to avoid renting.

8AM: SPEAK TO MY MANAGER

As we no longer see each other face-to-face, I have a call with my manager every day at 8am – that's a real brief call to see how things are going and highlight any key issues.

8.30AM: STEERING GROUP CALL

My next call is with all of the leadership team within central transport. We have an update on where we are with Covid, including a tracker for how many people are off and when we are expecting them back.

There has been a lot of assistance from within the partnership with regards to John Lewis staff helping out on the Waitrose side. That's looked after by the operations team – my job is purely about the vehicles and we put the vehicles wherever the business needs them.

We need to discuss the acquisition of new vehicles. The Waitrose home delivery fleet has about 1,000 vehicles now, but we expect that to grow to 1,400 by the end of the year.

We've seen a doubling of the Waitrose home delivery business since the coronavirus lockdown. Most of that has been accommodated by filling up all the available slots, but we'll need to expand the fleet this year quite substantially.

Pretty much everything we would be doing normally we are doing. All the major projects are still progressing, including our work to switch the truck fleet from diesel to bio-methane.

11AM: WORKSHOP MANAGER CALL

During the daily workshop managers call that's when a lot of things such as advice for staying safe in a Covid environment are communicated.

All our heavy trucks and trailers are maintained in the workshops along with some of the home delivery vehicles.

On the heavy trucks, maintenance hasn't really changed at all. With the vans we have made some adjustments to the maintenance regime on the very newest equipment to increase uptime.

Direct communication with technicians is more difficult. We tried video calls but it is more difficult in that environment. It's about making sure the

local workshop manager is informed. I was really concerned about what would happen if we had half the workshop off sick with the virus, but we've managed to function as normal. In terms of a service, it is pretty normal. We've got a lot of separation and PPE (personal protective equipment) to make sure the technicians are safe.

NOON: LUNCH AND EXERCISE

It's easy sit at the computer all day when working from home. When working at Bracknell, the site is huge and it's easy to clock up steps walking between meetings.

1PM: WORKSHOP VISIT

I visited our Magna Park workshop in Milton Keynes to ensure they were all satisfied with their PPE and were happy. Workshop people are one step back from the frontline. They aren't meeting customers, but they still go into work because the trucks have to deliver food to shops – it's very much a key occupation. As a food retailer we get some priority over sourcing PPE. Sometimes the PPE destined for us gets diverted to the NHS, but our access is better than an individual workshop.

3.30PM: TEAM HUDDLE

For home-based workers we have two video huddles per week. In the office, we would usually have one. It gives the chance to share a brief update on what is happening within the department and get the chance to ask questions.

We are prioritising video calls, partly because so much of human communication is non-verbal, but also because for someone working on their own from home it can be very lonely.

Some of these calls have 50 people all on video. That works really well.

Within the teams, if there is something to celebrate, we'll do that within the huddle. It is always good to celebrate good stuff.

5PM: VIRTUAL DRINKS WITH COLLEAGUES

Every Friday the company hosts virtual drinks with a quiz. It brings everyone together on a social level and is good fun.

Factfile

ORGANISATION: John Lewis Partnership

GENERAL MANAGER – FLEET: Justin Laney

FLEET SIZE: 3,500 (1,350 vans and light trucks, 350 rigid, 600 HGVs and 1,000 trailers)

WORKSHOPS: Seven currently, with an eighth set to open in August. Operated by 100 members of staff



FRONTLINE TWEETS - SOME OF THE THANK YOU MESSAGES SPOTTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

As we were leaving what was quite a difficult incident this afternoon (a man was experiencing a mental health crisis), we were approached by two-year-old Jacob and his mum Caterina, who left us some goodies on our vehicles. This wonderful act of kindness in support of emergency services through the current crisis is something to be celebrated. Thank you, Jacob and Caterina, they were very well received!
Policing Peterborough on Facebook.



Thank you, The AA, for helping with some car trouble while on shift today. Called in at 17.10 and on-site at 17.25, unbelievable! Thank you to the lovely Richard and #TeamAA for supporting NHS key workers during Covid-19.
Cher Hallett (@MissCherBear) on Twitter.



We're proud to announce that Keys Property Management has teamed up with Castell Howell Cash and Carry to provide key workers with treats and bottles of water to help throughout these difficult times. Diolch o gallon/thank you!
Keys Property (keys_property1) on Twitter.

Our wonderfully kind volunteers doing some essential PPE delivery to Exeter! Big thanks again to Land Rover for the loan of the Defender.
British Red Cross Somerset Emergency Responders (@brcsomerset) on Twitter.



Thank you so much Jaguar Land Rover for your very kind donation of visors for our community nursing North team.
Kim Drummond (KimDrummond6) on Twitter.



'Local authorities have stood up to the test'

Graham Telfer, Gateshead Council fleet manager, has made sure vital services for his borough in Tyne and Wear are maintained, even with the odds stacked against his teams due to social distancing. As told to *Tom Seymour*.

7:30AM START WORK AT HEAD OFFICE

I'll start the day checking emails and making contact with the teams and review all the vehicles going out on their jobs across the borough. I have to be here centrally so I'm available if something goes wrong as we have to respond quickly.

Part of my job is making sure we can maintain services across refuse, garden waste, residual waste, recycling, grounds maintenance, cemetery undertakings and community-based services.

We have 35 26-tonne refuse vehicles in use and there has been a real challenge with how we operate them on a daily basis due to the fact they usually run with crews of three to four in a single vehicle. It's impossible to adhere to social distancing of two metres in that situation, so we've had to put together a support fleet with the two team members following the main refuse truck in separate vans. They'll park up and then follow the route for a certain area on foot, then head back to their vans to follow the truck to the next zone.

9AM: CHECK DELIVERIES FOR SCHOOL MEALS

We're not just using our light commercial vehicle (LCV) fleet to support the refuse teams, but also to help support schools to deliver packed lunches for those children of key workers and to make drops at food banks.

None of the schools can prep their own food on site at this time, so I will make sure our fleet is available to get deliveries out before lunch. That can be a real challenge. All the schools want the meals before the dinner bell rings.

We have a fleet of 300 vans across the council and what is available has been bolstered by vehicles that would normally be used for joinery or plumbing becoming freed-up. Those jobs have stopped or reduced. We're also using these vehicles to help distribute personal protective equipment (PPE)

to those who need it. We have an additional flex of 40 small vans through our supplier Northgate Vehicle Hire to provide additional capacity where we need it. We have a total of 200 drivers working across vehicles to keep services running smoothly.

10AM: CHECK-IN WITH THE WORKSHOP TEAMS

The original set-up for maintenance of vehicles has changed hugely. We have one, centralised depot for maintenance, but to maintain safe distances we're working to a 50% team reduction in shifts, so across the total team of 35, we'll have a team of 10 one week on, then the week after another team of 10 will come in.

There's some scope built in for eight or nine people to be off self-isolating if they or members of their family have symptoms. We're having to run things this way because we can't afford to have the entire team off and self-isolating as this would severely impact our capacity to maintain vehicles and keep vehicles on the road. We are deep cleaning vehicles every day with heavy duty disinfectant to give drivers some level of confidence and to support them in their role.

Factfile

ORGANISATION: Gateshead Council
FLEET MANAGER WASTE SERVICES, GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND FLEET MANAGEMENT COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT: Graham Telfer

FLEET SIZE: 550 total (including 35 refuse vehicles up to 26 tonnes, 300 LCVs, four Luton vans, 200 trucks 7.5-tonne to 18-tonne, plus up to 40 additional small vans on short-term rental)

NUMBER OF STAFF: 235 (35 maintenance staff, 200 drivers)

NOON: LOOK AT MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

We can't afford to let routine maintenance lapse so we're carrying on with all MOTs and servicing as we would normally. I don't want to be in a position where we're coming out of this and we have the entire fleet due for a service and MOT.

We're getting ourselves into a pattern so we don't find ourselves over encumbered and the scheduling has been thrown into disarray. Manufacturers' parts have generally been able to keep to next-day delivery.

2PM: INDUSTRY UPDATES

Guidance from the Department of Transport has been really clear and there have been regular updates coming through. So, that is part of my daily routine. I'll also check with the Freight Transport Association (FTA) and Driving for Better Business Covid-19 transport toolkit as that has been a good resource for guidance and keeping up-to-date. Every two or three days something changes.

5PM: VIDEO CONFERENCING

We've been checking in across the management teams using video conferencing every other day to update the latest on what's happening. I'll also do a workshop meeting face-to-face every day while maintaining the two metre social distancing.

10PM: FINAL EMAIL CHECK

While I'll leave the office at around 5pm, I'll still be checking emails in the evening to make sure there have been no urgent developments we need to be prepared for the following day.

The NHS and local authorities have stood up to the test. Instead of bouncing off the walls, we have successfully kept the lights on for the country and it has been a lesson in how to knuckle down and get on with what needs to be done.



CASE STUDY

TONY ROBINSON, REFUSE COLLECTION DRIVER, GATESHEAD COUNCIL



The lockdown has created new challenges for Gateshead Council's refuse collection team as they maintain social distancing in a work environment that would normally see close contact between crews.

Tony Robinson, Gateshead refuse collection driver, said his shift is still starting at around 7.15am with the usual vehicle checks, before they set out on their rounds at 7.30am.

They would normally operate with a three-man crew in the truck, but now Robinson will drive solo and other members of the team will follow in separate vans to maintain social distancing.

Vehicles are deep cleaned before the start of the shift and there is a 'plentiful supply' of latex gloves, extra rolls of blue paper and sanitiser wipes to clean things down.

Robinson said: "I'm wiping down the cab, steering wheel and handles on an hourly basis.

"The fact we're handling potentially hazardous items from people's houses that could be contaminated with Covid-19 is not lost on us or the teams, so we take this extremely seriously. It's at the back of my mind when I'm working."

The biggest changes to Robinson's job has been the fact there are more parked vehicles due to the lockdown which has made it more difficult to manoeuvre his 26-tonne truck.

The flipside of that is a fall in traffic congestion in the morning, so the crews can travel to their jobs slightly quicker than usual.

Robinson said: "Our shifts can take us an extra two hours on average due to the extra time it's taking due to the much greater volumes of refuse. People staying at home has meant there has been a lot of spring cleaning and clearing out of houses. There's just a lot more refuse for us to collect."

FLEET & MOBILITY LIVE

fleetandmobilitylive.co.uk | October 6-7

With four theatres and 18 seminar sessions over two days, Fleet & Mobility Live 2020 will offer insight, learning and ideas to help every type of company running a fleet of cars, vans and/or trucks improve its efficiency and effectiveness while keeping staff safe.

In a break from recent years, we have moved away from the two main session streams, one for strategy and one for operations, to focus on the topics of most importance to fleets. However, the Discover Fleet Theatre, with its best practice guidance for HR directors, finance director and procurement directors involved in fleet decision making, will remain a fundamental part of the show.

Here, we outline the sessions planned, while the search for the best quality speakers is under way.

EV THEATRE: FOUR SESSIONS

With benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax rates reducing to 0% from April, demand from company car drivers was expected to soar for electric vehicles (EVs) this year. The general view was that registrations numbers would only be restrained by the amount of supply availability.

Obviously, the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the new car market, but it remains the case that EVs will continue to take a growing share of fleet. Companies also believe that EVs can help bring cash takers back into the car scheme because of the huge savings on BIK.

In the EV Theatre, leaders from the electric vehicle industry will look at how fleets can accelerate their uptake of EVs, while those who have already made the investment will share their key learnings to help others evade the potential obstacles.

Case studies will consider the challenges around charging, procurement, running costs, maintenance, total cost of ownership and how moving to EVs has affected the fleet's daily operations.

MOBILITY THEATRE: FOUR SESSIONS

Mobility, the multi-modal movement of people, goods and services, is fast becoming a priority for businesses, particularly those with operations in urban areas.

Cities and metropolitan regions are keen to 'clean the streets', removing congestion and pollution to improve the environment for residents and workers, and this has implications for companies who currently rely on cars and vans for operations travel and transport.

In this theatre, sessions will include a leading pioneer of mobility as a service (MaaS) providing a strategic view of success stories from other countries and how companies can expect the market to develop in the UK.

We will also look at the freight and logistics market, inviting a representative from the Department for Transport (DfT) to set out its future freight strategy, including how businesses can continue to operate in zero emission zones, plus a case study with a company taking an innovative approach to last mile delivery in urban areas.

Another session will assess the role of mobility credits, and how the position of fleet manager is evolving.

As companies prepare for the MaaS evolution, a session will look at how the responsibilities of fleet decision-makers are expanding beyond automotive and will, ultimately, encompass all areas of mobility. It will also reveal how mobility credits can be integrated into a fleet's transport strategy while a leading fleet expert will explain the value of introducing a mobility credit scheme.



FLEET APPRECIATION FOR ESSENTIAL SERVICES

At Fleet & Mobility Live 2020, *Fleet News* will recognise and honour the amazing fleets that have kept the country going during the pandemic.

These essential services, including emergency services, delivery companies, utilities and construction, have kept their vehicles and drivers on the road, operating safely and

efficiently under the most difficult of circumstances.

We want to publicly recognise and thank them for their efforts by inviting them to join us at two special roundtables during Fleet & Mobility Live during which they can share their experiences of managing their fleets through the Covid-19 crisis, including

WE

2020. Hall 20, NEC

DISCOVER FLEET THEATRE: SIX SESSIONS

Each day will have three sessions targeting the broader fleet decision-making unit and those newer to fleet management.

■ **Procurement:** Best practice on procurement skills, wholelife costs of fleet contracts and tips on managing suppliers.

■ **HR:** Driver wellbeing, managing risk and fatigue will be explored in this session with best practice advice from transport behaviour and mental health specialists.

■ **Finance:** The latest thinking from HMRC on company car taxation, potential changes covering areas like plug-in vehicles and grants. Experts will also look at the different funding options available to fleets.



what they learned and how it has influenced future practices.

We will then invite the fleets to a special 'Appreciation Lunch' where we will share some of their positive stories and provide additional insight into how the industry adapted to the crisis to keep essential services going and supporting key workers.



OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE: FOUR SESSIONS

Topics for these sessions will reflect the market challenges presented by coronavirus, as well as providing advice and guidance on key areas of business excellence across the fleet.

Running an efficient fleet has taken on a whole new perspective as some businesses come to terms with furloughed drivers and industry lockdowns, while others see demand rocket to record levels, including the emergency services and delivery operators, as they keep Britain moving.

We will provide insight into crisis management and running a fleet under the most intense pressures, as well as considering lessons learned from the current pandemic with disaster planning experts and fleet case studies.

Safety will remain a priority for all fleets, whose responsibilities towards the welfare and protection of drivers and other road users are undiminished. A fleet safety pioneer will outline the steps his company took to improve safety and reduce risk in its business.

Other sessions will include expert advice on using data to predict the future and be more pre-emptive, exploring how to bring together multiple sources of fleet data from telematics, fuel cards, connected cars and licence checks to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

Fleets will discover how to use e-learning to store driver data and create safety profiles, as well as how technology can manage fuel costs and reassess vehicle utilisation and productivity.

WHY DID YOU ATTEND FLEET LIVE IN 2019?

86%

to meet current or new suppliers

58%

to keep up to date with fleet policy and best practice

56%

to obtain information to help me do my job

46%

to find out about new products and services

30%

to understand more about new technology

27%

to learn more about low- and zero-emission vehicles

EXHIBITORS TO DATE

AID Fuel Oils Group
Alfa Fleet/Tail Lift Services
ARI
Athlon UK
Autoserve
BP Fleet Solutions
Chevin Fleet Solutions
E-Driving
Fleet Check
Fleet Operations
FuelGenie
Grosvenor Leasing
HaynesPro (UK) Ltd
Jaama Ltd
JCT600 Vehicle Leasing Solutions
John Jordan Ltd
LAP Electrical Ltd
LeasePlan
Licence Check
Locks 4 Vans Ltd
Lytx
Masternaut
Maxus
Modul-System Ltd
Nexus Vehicle Rental
Northgate Vehicle Hire
Ogilvie Fleet
ProtectAVan Solutions Ltd
Quartix Ltd
RAM Mount UK Ltd
Reflex Vehicle Hire
Samsara
Smart Fleet Solutions
Solon Security
TCH Leasing
TTC Group
VisionTrack
Volkswagen Financial Services Fleet
Webfleet Solutions
XPI Simulations
Zenith

Trail-blazers! Fire services discover two is better than one

It may be fairly common for police forces to work together on vehicle purchase to bring costs down, but such collaborations are more rare in the fire service. *Stephen Briers* reports

Collaboration is gathering pace among the emergency services. Police fleets have been the trail-blazers, working together on procurement and framework tenders for years through their national association. Some, such as Kent and Essex Police and Police Scotland, have gone as far as formally joining 'forces' to create a single fleet.

Examples are scarcer among the ambulance and fire services, although South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's joint partnership agreement signed in 2018 with South Yorkshire Police resulted in a merged fleet operation.

Nestled up against the Welsh border are two fire and rescue fleets that have been quietly working together on procurement projects for the past couple of years.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (H&W) and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service spotted an opportunity to boost efficiencies and save money on their fleets by identifying vehicles that could be jointly specified and, therefore, jointly tendered.

It started with a recognition that both organisations needed to address environmental and air quality concerns by finding low emission vehicles to incorporate into their fleets.

Exploratory work carried out by H&W resulted in a joint deal with Volvo to supply the latest XC60 4x4 response cars in three batches from 2018 to 2020, the latest being the new mild hybrid versions. Both organisations saved back office resource, administration time and, of course, budget.

So far, H&W has taken 36 cars, Shropshire 23. They provide support to their emergency response officers. But hybrid is just the first step in the collaboration, according to H&W transport manager Jeff Dickson.

"We are both looking at cleaning up our act. The next cars we get may be plug-in hybrid," he says. "We can't go full electric yet because many of our cars do a couple of hundred miles a day. But fully electric-powered fire engines are on the horizon with London Fire and Rescue Service having the first UK-built electric truck in build now."

Dickson's counterpart at Shropshire, vehicle

contracts manager Martin Barclay, is similarly keen to reduce fleet emissions and points to an electric fire engine already in use in Los Angeles as evidence that progress is being made.

Back in the UK, the London Service's prototype electric Volvo truck, being built by Emergency One in Scotland, will drive on electric and has enough charge to pump water for four hours before the diesel unit kicks in.

"We will buy the cleanest trucks we can get," Barclay says, "but it has to be viable on cost. We can invest £250,000 for an appliance and after 15 years we sell it for £3,000. There isn't much of a market for second-hand fire engines!"

However, he's mindful that the tightening rules on ultra-low emission zones will force compliance, and there's no exemption for the fire services.

"We have to comply to the same regulations," he says. "But it will probably be four or five years before we can get electric fire engines."

Electric cars are an entirely different proposition. Although the current use case is limited, Shropshire has added three Hyundai Kona electric models into its pool fleet, one with the long-range 64kWh battery, two with the 39kWh unit.

"We found that the 39kWh cars can be lacking in range, especially in winter," Barclay says. "We've now placed an order for two new Renault Zoe EVs with the extended range."

Drivers were initially reluctant to test them, but once behind the wheel "they would've bought the cars off us," Barclay quips.

The Konas are booked online, with a two-week waiting time such is the level of demand. The fire service also invested in charge points at around half its 23 stations, making it the biggest network provider in the county. They are open for public use and proving highly popular.

The investment was a perfect example of forward planning. The charge points were installed by Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue at stations that had cabling installed during refurbishments five years ago.

"We pre-empted the introduction of electric vehicles – we already saw the direction of travel with the (Nissan) Leaf," Barclay explains.

Both services decided to switch from contract hire to outright purchase when procuring the hybrid XC60s (H&W already used a mix of the two funding methods).

For Barclay, it was a taxation decision that also offered increased flexibility, supported by a four-year breakdown and recovery agreement, four-year warranty and parts/labour discounts under the joint service level agreement (SLA).

"We consider it to be better value, particularly when we de-fleet the vehicles," he says. "We can also take advantage of the current market – if new technology, such as electric vehicles, appears, we can extend or reduce the operating cycle of the Volvos to take advantage."

The ease with which the two fleets began collaborating helped pave the way for a more wide-ranging strategic alliance between the fire services introduced late last year. For Dickson and Barclay, it will bring together risk management procedures and procurement which will lead to even closer collaboration on vehicles and their specifications.

There are caveats, though. It remains difficult to completely match fire engines due to differences in breathing apparatus and other

**HEREFORD & WORCESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
TRANSPORT MANAGER:** Jeff Dickson
NO OF STATIONS: 25

FLEET: front line fire engines – 41; red specialist vehicles – 30; white fleet (support vehicles including vans) – 50; response cars – 36
OPERATING CYCLE: trucks 15-20 years; white fleet 6-10 years; response cars – four years

**SHROPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
VEHICLE CONTRACTS MANAGER:** Martin Barclay
NO OF STATIONS: 23

FLEET: front line fire engines – 28; red specialist vehicles – 22; white fleet – 29; response cars – 23
OPERATING CYCLE: trucks 15-20 years; white fleet 6-10 years; response cars – four years



Collaboration between Jeff Dickson (left) and Martin Barclay is saving large sums for two fire services

Equipment, but the alliance will result in greater standardisation across both fleets.

Collaboration isn't limited within the two fire services, however. Both H&W and Shropshire buy their pool cars – 20–25 per fleet – via the national police and Crown Commercial Services frameworks. Cars tend to be estates, increasingly 1.0-litre petrol Vauxhall and Ford models for the lower emissions.

"We benefit from the police volumes that drive down the price," says Barclay, "although the trade-off is having less control about what wins the tender."

H&W and Shropshire operate one workshop apiece, as well as mobile maintenance vans.

Shropshire's facility prioritises the red fleet and operational equipment – "where the biggest risk is" – while the Volvo XC60s go to the franchised network under the joint SLA. The support vehicles, including cars, minibus and vans, which Barclay calls his 'grey' fleet, are serviced at the police workshop in Shrewsbury.

This arrangement used to be replicated at H&W, but it recently brought maintenance on its support vehicles in-house.

"The police used to do some of our fleet, and it was good value cost-wise, but logistically it's easier to manage in-house," Dickson says. "And we had the capacity."

Both fire services invest heavily in mechanic/technician training as part of their holistic safety regime, and this is another area where collaboration could save money. They are in talks with West Midlands Fire Service on a partnership deal which could cut the cost of training in half, from £8,000 to £4,000 per mechanic.

H&W operates a 12-week maintenance schedule, with three inspections taking place at the station and one major service a year in the workshop. They are supported by two mobile vans which run 24/7 in a crucial role.

"To bring a vehicle in for a service, we have to give them another vehicle and that can take two mechanics around half a day to change the equipment over," says Dickson. "The mobile vans mean they can stay on the road."

Regular servicing is critical to minimise the risk of failure, which is potentially high due to the inconsistent nature of the job.

Fire engines tend to operate short journeys in low gears within a 10–20-mile radius of the station, continuously weighted at 13–15 tonnes. Some can do more than 20,000 miles a year; others less than 10,000. A busy engine might handle in the region of 75 jobs per month while some at rural stations do far less.

And these 18-tonne vehicles have to be reliable over a 15-year lifespan.

The safety regime also considers the level of equipment in the vehicles. Stability control, autonomous braking and lane departure warning is now standard on the fire engines,



MEN OF EXPERIENCE



Jeff Dickson will retire for the second time in September after 51 years in the trade.

He has been with Hereford and Worcester (H&W) for the past two-and-a-half years, and before that spent eight years at Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue.

"I retired after Durham and moved to Herefordshire," he says. "I only came in [to the station] for a coffee because I knew the old transport manager – but I was persuaded to come back!"

The needs of the two have inherent differences – but it's still a fire service with fire trucks and associated equipment so there is plenty of commonality, too.

Also universal are the workshop facilities, an area Dickson knows well. He spent 18 years as a heavy goods mechanic and ran a workshop for an ambulance service for another 13 years.

He also spent time at Newcastle airport as maintenance controller looking after 600 pieces of kit.

"That's where I first came across electric vehicles – we had a lot at the airport," he says.

"These are the things that keep the job interesting, the way technology progresses."



Martin Barclay started as an apprentice mechanic at an international haulier working on everything from LGVs to trailer fridge units and

forklifts, a role he stayed in for 10 years.

After this, he moved to a Volvo truck dealer and, during a 10-year stay, progressed through the ranks to team leader.

Then came a move to a local Renault car dealer for a couple of years.

This varied background gave Barclay the skills for a job at a fire service, and he started as a mechanic at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2003, moving to workshop supervisor in 2009 and then to his current role of vehicle contracts manager in 2012.

"The job satisfaction is second to none in a fire service, you feel you're adding real benefits to the community by helping keep them safe," he says.

He has undergone several training courses to build his knowledge, including FTA Fleet Manager qualifications, risk, people and contract management courses and the International transport manager CPC.

A priority is to replace outgoing vehicles with EVs "if appropriate – i.e. a vehicle that returns to base with sufficient range to be used again without an extended recharge".

SPOTLIGHT ON....



“WE CAN LEARN
FROM EACH OTHER
AND WORK
TOGETHER ON NEW
PROJECTS. EVERYONE
BENEFITS”

JEFF DICKSON, H&W FIRE
AND RESCUE SERVICE

with a full set of airbag suspension.

Like many bluelight services, driver training sits in a separate department. Some of the emergency vehicles have telematics but it isn't continuously monitored for driving behaviour because of the low mileage, high speed journey profiles – measuring g-forces and fuel consumption (typically 4-6mpg because of stationary operations) offers few benefits.

However, the data is retrieved for incident investigation and provided to the training department for coaching purposes.

Telematics is complemented by a six-camera CCTV system offering 360-degree coverage. Currently on 10% of the frontline fleet, the cameras will be standard for future purchases.

“They protect our drivers from being blamed for car damage, such as broken wing mirrors – we can now prove their innocence,” says Dickson. “They also make a huge difference on

accident investigation and insurance claims.

“We used them a lot at Durham (Dickson's former role – see panel) and the police often asked us for footage. It reduced the number of claims and easily paid for itself, while also resulting in lower insurance premiums.”

Barclay adds: “We are working with Zurich, which has done a fleet risk analysis, including our training department, workshop qualifications, maintenance regime, auditing and vehicle safety equipment, and that reduced our risk rating. We've only just done it, so we haven't established the saving yet.”

The two services' latest fire engines are installed with Emergency One's E1 Fleet system for diagnostics, enabling the workshop to dial in remotely to identify any potential faults with the vehicle or even adjust and upload operational parameters or recalibrations. It also provides data on the level of water in the tank and pump usage, as well as vehicle location.

Vehicle and equipment standardisation among the fire and rescue services has historically been confined to a single region, but there is now a growing number of organisations crossing county boundaries to collaborate, with the likes of H&W and Shropshire showing what's possible.

“This will happen more,” says Dickson. “It's good practice – we can learn from each other and work together on new projects. Everyone benefits.”

■ *This interview was carried out before the coronavirus lockdown.*

...Managing uptime

Keeping fire engines on the road and ready for use is the absolute priority for the two fire services.

In addition to robust maintenance schedules and proactive preventative maintenance with remote diagnostics systems, a number of other processes are employed.

■ Vehicles are checked by crews twice a day at change-over with any defects reported to the workshop via email and turned into a job sheet.

■ Every three years, the main batteries are replaced. Failure rates tend to be between three and four years.

■ The fire services have moved to LED headlights where available with protectors and have added mirror protectors to prevent them smashing if hit (a common problem for all heavy vehicle operators).

■ The vehicles have battery guard protection equipment for the auxiliary systems which keep the batteries charged. If the voltage falls below 24 volts, the system switches off all the consumables to prevent further drainage. When the crew hits a button, everything starts up. The system also alerts the crew when it reaches 24.5 volts so action can be taken.

... new water features

Hereford & Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services are both committed to continuously improving the design of their fire engines.

One of Martin Barclay's priorities has been to increase the water tank capacity, which, historically, held 1,800 litres.

“With fewer fire hydrants available in certain areas, it is important for the fire engines to carry as much water as possible,” he explains.

The previous design used aluminium bodywork with a separate interior water tank. The two fire services are now building appliances with a 3,000-litre water tank by improving the bodywork design with co-polymer reinforced bodies, so the tank becomes part of the bodywork.

Barclay is writing a spec based on the 3,000-litre tank design, initially for three vehicles with an option to extend to five.

“We will also have an option to split the tank with 2,000 litres of water and 1,000 of foam, improving the operational resilience of the fleet by having combined vehicles rather than one separate foam vehicle,” he says.

WINNER: ŠKODA SUPERB

HEAD OF FLEET: HENRY WILLIAMS
TIME IN THE ROLE: FOUR YEARS
TOTAL FLEET SALES (Q1): 17,330
TRUE FLEET SALES (Q1): 5,531
(LEASING, AND FLEET OTHER)

Škoda head of fleet Henry Williams holds the trophy surrounded by his colleagues



'Superb iV is critical to our true fleet performance'

Škoda's first plug-in hybrid, the Superb iV, has taken a 50% share of the model's true fleet sales despite the Covid-19 lockdown, says fleet boss Henry Williams. *Sarah Tooze* reports

When *Fleet News* caught up with Škoda's head of fleet Henry Williams earlier this year the brand had recently launched its first plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV), the Superb iV, a car which he described as "critical to our true fleet performance".

He was keen to demonstrate the Superb iV's 30-plus-mile pure electric range and we went for a drive in the top spec L&K near the Volkswagen Group UK head office in Milton Keynes.

Since then, the Covid-19 pandemic has made doing an interview in that manner impossible.

It has thrown manufacturers' 2020 plans into disarray with countries in lockdown, factories closed for weeks and profits tumbling.

The Volkswagen Group experienced revenue falls of more than 8% (£4.3 billion) from January to March, while operating profit dropped by 81.4% (£3.4bn).

Škoda sold 13.7% fewer cars globally during that period, with Volkswagen suffering a 16%

decline, Audi 12% and Seat 20.6%. In the UK, Škoda's true fleet sales (leasing and fleet other) fell by 30.3% versus Q1 2019 (from 7,939 to 5,531).

However, factories have since reopened, with safety precautions in place to protect staff (Škoda's three Czech plants reopened on April 27), and Williams says that Škoda has increased its true fleet market share from 4.1% to 4.5% YTD April, despite the challenges.

He adds that the Superb order take has been "good".



"Understandably, the Covid-19 lockdown will have an impact but order take (for the Superb) has been in line with our plan," he says.

That plan means 50% of the Superb's true fleet sales are plug-in hybrids.

It's a reflection of the fleet market's appetite for electric vehicles (EVs) and the pricing strategy Škoda has adopted.

"The traditional manufacturer model of pricing a car is to look at the retail price versus competitors and then you may adjust the price dependent on equipment," Williams says.

"We haven't done that with this car, it's more based on wholelife cost to get as much equivalency to petrol and diesel options of Superb as we can.

"We also offer it on many trim levels to cater for user choosers and job-need drivers who have a set budget and need specific levels of equipment."

Drivers can choose between SE Technology (the most popular fleet choice), SE L, SportLine Plus and L&K, with P11D values starting at £33,535 for the hatch. That's £1,035 more than the 2.0 TDI 190 SE L auto (£32,500) and £545

more than the 1.5 TSI 150PS SportLine Plus auto (£32,990).

For benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax there is a £3,146 annual saving versus the petrol (£1,341 versus £4,487) and a £3,339 saving versus the diesel (£4,680) for a 40% taxpayer.

Williams says this makes it a "no-brainer for a company car driver" and gives the fleet manager "a much better reasoning for bringing grey fleet drivers back into the governance of the company car fleet".

It would be logical for him to adopt the same wholelife cost pricing strategy with the new Octavia plug-in hybrid and mild hybrid. However, this is unconfirmed and pricing will not be announced until the summer, with orders open shortly after that, having been pushed back slightly due to the temporary halt in production.

Williams expects the PHEV to be "a really important part of the mix" and could take a 50% share of true fleet sales, like the Superb iV.

A VRS version will also be available and is likely to take a 20% share due to its popularity with blue-light fleets.

The brand's first pure electric SUV, the Enyaq iV, will be unveiled this autumn (having been originally pencilled in for mid-year).

Fleet News: What can fleet operators expect from the Enyaq?

Henry Williams: It's a very practical car but very stylised so it's a whole new design era for Škoda. We don't want to create a car which isn't going to work for your family or your lifestyle. It's got to be almost no compromise to move to electric cars because we want mass adoption. It's going to be a real game changer from what people see today.

FN: What is your EV charging proposition?

HW: There's a lot of investment going into infrastructure and that's really important. But our view is that most charging is going to happen at home or at destination because once you've got a range on an electric vehicle of more than 250 miles it's rare that you're going to need to charge en route unless you are a very high mileage driver. It's a shift in mindset for drivers.

I'm not sure people really appreciate what a convenience it is to have 250-300 miles of range in your car from when you leave home in the morning, every morning. It's not 'oh I've got to go to the petrol station on my way to my first appointment because I haven't got enough fuel to get there'.

And if you're doing a 400-mile day where you might need to top-up there are rapid chargers available, and more will become available. But that is still going to be a rarity for most drivers.

FN: Some fleet operators are targeting a zero-emission fleet by 2030. How do they achieve it?

HW: It's chicken and egg. Manufacturers are investing heavily into it and most will be launching electric vehicles within the next year. Across the group we are going to launch 75 fully electric cars in the next nine years and the investment into that is staggering, €33bn (£29bn). That comes with our determination to be net zero CO₂ emissions by 2040, in alignment with the Paris Accord. We understand that is the future and we have set our

FleetNews

AWARDS 2020

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

The Superb cannot be knocked off its perch as the best car in this segment. Refreshed last year with more technology and improved infotainment, the Superb makes it five wins in a row thanks to its low running costs, ample space, good looks and economical engines, which now include a hybrid version.

**"I'M NOT SURE
PEOPLE REALLY
APPRECIATE WHAT A
CONVENIENCE IT IS TO
HAVE 250-300 MILES OF
RANGE IN YOUR CAR**

HENRY WILLIAMS, ŠKODA UK

business up to deliver it. The market is going to take off for hybrids and electric cars, not just in fleet but overall, so we're looking at 25% of Škoda's mix by 2025.

FN: How are you supporting fleets during the coronavirus lockdown and beyond?

HW: We remain in constant contact with customers to understand their position and how we can help. We are working with them on vehicle supply as well as providing access to repairs through our retail network to help keep key workers on the road.

For our emergency services customers who are on the frontline of the pandemic, we are working hard to ensure we can support where they need at this crucial time. This has included the supply of additional vehicles from our own fleet and, alongside our logistics providers, we are continuing to convert and deliver new vehicles that are needed to support the increased demand. We are also putting new processes in place to ensure supply of parts, and are continuing to take new orders and working with converters to get them processed safely and without delay. ➔



Henry Williams, head of fleet, Škoda UK (centre), picked up the award from Marchel Koops, chief commercial officer of sponsor Athlon International, and awards host Steph McGovern

FN: When the restrictions are lifted, how soon will deliveries be made?

HW: The brand is evaluating all of its operations as the global situation develops. We are still making every effort to deliver vehicles on time and we are identifying any delays at the earliest opportunity to keep our customers updated.

FN: How are you supporting your retail network during the coronavirus lockdown and beyond?

HW: The safety of our colleagues and customers is top priority.

We follow the guidance set out by the Government and the advice from the World Health Organisation and are in constant contact with our retailer network.

Our retailers are available for customers to contact by phone and email for support and enquiries and many of our retailer colleagues are still carrying out urgent vehicle maintenance.

FN: You launched your Škoda Business Centres last year. How many dealers have signed up?

HW: We're at 30 now out of 120 so, basically, a quarter of the network which is really good. It was quite a big transition for our dealer network.

We previously had some dealers who were selling through a local business development manager in their dealerships, some dealers who were selling to leasing companies and major corporates, some who were doing both and a lot of the network not doing any of that.

The Škoda Business Centres bring the experts looking after local business and major corporates

OUR RETAILERS
ARE AVAILABLE FOR
CUSTOMERS TO
CONTACT BY PHONE
AND EMAIL FOR
SUPPORT

HENRY WILLIAMS, ŠKODA UK

and leasing companies together in one place.

We put a programme of support in to help them and gave them the tools to be able to do that. They had to apply to upgrade their business to become a Škoda Business Centre so put more resource in, put more infrastructure in and sign-up to some pretty strong terms and conditions from us about the way they manage their business and how they look after customers.

FN: Tell us more about your new aftersales programme.

HW: We revised it in June last year and it's focused on customer satisfaction for leasing companies and end-users.

We've introduced some terms and conditions that our dealer network will adhere to such as an average 30-minute booking response time, we will pick up and drop off your car if it's within a

30-minute drive and a leasing company will never pay more than £64.90 per hour for labour (excluding VAT).

It just adds to what we're trying to do, which is put the customer at the heart of everything we do.

Williams preferred not to comment on how much of a decline in fleet sales the brand is forecasting this year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, saying simply that the situation is "constantly evolving" and "we are reviewing the forecast for the year on a regular basis".

However, having achieved his aim of securing 1,000 fleet customers by the end of last year (up from 150 when Williams joined the brand as national fleet sales manager in 2013), his next goal is greater penetration of those fleets.

That will be achieved through new product, although the Superb and Octavia still take the lion's share (around 70% of true fleet sales), and greater engagement.

To that end, Škoda launched a customer forum last year, bringing together 30-40 of its biggest customers to discuss industry issues and future strategy.

"It's a great opportunity to learn from customers and listen to what they want from us," Williams says.

Customer feedback will become even more important as fleets and manufacturers adapt to the coronavirus situation. What form that feedback has to take – whether 'virtually' or face-to-face – remains to be seen.



SMART TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

DATE: **27 OCTOBER 2020**

VENUE: **ETC VENUES,
MANCHESTER PICCADILLY**

In partnership with



Transport for
Greater Manchester

Find out about local and national
government transport challenges

•
Listen to multi-modal solutions
from private sector stakeholders

•
Network with senior public and
private stakeholders

Register your interest now at
conference.smarttransport.org.uk

Headline strategic partners



Q&A

COVID-19: YOUR FLEET QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Whether you are running an essential services fleet or have furloughed drivers, this advice will help you cope with the current coronavirus crisis

In April, *Fleet News* hosted a webinar sponsored by Driving for Better Business and FleetCheck, looking at the impact of coronavirus on UK businesses and providing advice and guidance about the types of actions they could take.

The 30-minute presentation ended with questions. Many were answered during the session, others were taken away to find out the answers.

Thanks to Simon Turner at Driving for Better Business, Peter Golding at FleetCheck, Lisa Dorn at Cranfield University, Kevin Curtis at Driving Monitor, Nigel Morris at MHA and the Freight Transport Association (FTA) for providing the answers.

We have split them into business continuity, essential drivers, non-essential drivers and vehicles.

A more comprehensive version is on the *Fleet News* website at: www.fleetnews.co.uk/Covid-19-Qanda.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Q What business plans are being made for when we restart regarding operating models in areas where social distancing and vehicle sanitisation is required?

A Some of the fleets we are talking to have developed or evolved robust sanitisation policies to deal with the current situation and are looking to maintain these as permanent components of their overall health and safety policies. With indications that social distancing could last for another year, and that subsequent waves of infection could require further lockdowns, this seems like a sensible approach. The current crisis has also highlighted the need for resilience which requires a strong financial base and efficient operations. Strong fleet management to control unnecessary costs is, therefore, essential.

Peter Golding, managing director, FleetCheck

A FTA is working closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) on its Restart and Recover plan for all supply chains. We have stressed that in many areas, the supply chain will not know when to restart operations until demand has restored; this means the Government is going to have to be agile in the guidance it provides. We are also highlighting other regulatory barriers which could cause constraints when the supply chain is under significant pressure (e.g. HGV testing). The Government has provided a range of relaxations for the purposes of maintaining critical supply chains during the grip of the crisis (food, medicine, fuel), the decisions it will need to make during the recovery period will be in respect of economic recovery rather than critical supplies so weighing that up against regulatory safety provisions will be very different.

FTA Policy Team

Q For those companies that have downsized, and where staff have been allocated additional responsibilities, how are they managing driver safety?

A There is no relaxation of an operator's duty of care. These aspects are issues that the business would be expected to manage appropriately. Traffic Commissioners have issued guidance surrounding expectations of continuous and effective management during the crisis.

FTA Policy Team

A Companies need to ensure they stick with their safety policies. This is usually a case of continuing with their current processes even with smaller teams. Given the systems available today, most of the driver compliance checks are automated and will continue to function, and any physical checks such as vehicle inspections and driver training can still take place with the current tools and processes available.

Kevin Curtis, managing director, Driving Monitor

Q Are companies adjusting their fleet policies to incorporate social distancing, protective clothing, sanitisation of vehicles, etc.?

A Many companies have put policies in place following Government guidelines including social distancing, wearing of gloves etc. Some companies operating RCVs (refuse collection vehicles) are also looking at ways to separate out the truck's cab area, with screens to separate the driver from crew members. Any screens fitted should not obscure the driver's view or impede the use of any controls. Any fittings must not have any jagged edges. The DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) should be notified of any modifications made to the vehicle's cab to ensure it is still safe to use. This can be done using a notifiable alteration and include any notes, drawings/photos etc. in the application.

FTA Policy Team

ESSENTIAL DRIVERS

Q Can we clarify that the temporary relaxation in drivers' hours is NOT for all drivers, just the ones classified as essential workers?

A Check out Gov.uk for coronavirus (Covid-19): guidance on drivers' hours relaxations and further guidance on the temporary relaxation of enforcement. The guidance says you can only take advantage of this change if your journeys are essential. Drivers, even in emergencies, are not expected to drive more than 11 hours or have less than nine hours' rest each day. It also says the standard drivers' hours rules are important safety-related rules put in place to improve road safety and the working conditions of drivers and reduce the risk of drivers being involved in fatigue-related accidents. These temporary relaxations should only be used where absolutely necessary.

Simon Turner, campaign manager, Driving for Better Business

A Initially, the relaxation was applied only to very specific sectors, such as the food retail supply chains, then on March 23 the relaxation was applied to the whole industry. No specific restrictions were applied; the DfT notice states: "Although the relaxations are not limited to specific sectors or journeys, they should only be used where necessary. Otherwise normal drivers' hours rules should apply. We believe the relaxations should be used by drivers involved in the carriage of essential goods by road; such as for example, the carriage of medical equipment/supplies (including oxygen and clinical waste); and the delivery of essential food and hygiene items (including animal feed and milk collection)."

FTA Policy Team

NON-ESSENTIAL DRIVERS

Q What type of training is being provided to drivers regarding the risks associated with the current climate, especially around vehicle sanitisation?

A Public Health England has approved a guidance note, issued by the DfT, on best practices to ensure vehicle cabs are kept clean and healthy using regular cleaning methods. It stresses that the frequency of cleaning protocols needs to be increased – especially if a vehicle has a high utilisation level (in which case it should be doubled) – and take place when crews change over. All hard surfaces that are touched often (e.g. door handles, steering wheels) should be cleaned frequently.

FTA Policy Team

Q Can you confirm furloughed company car drivers are still eligible to use their cars for essential private trips – i.e. shopping – given the person is still an employee and being taxed on the benefit?

A Yes. Furlough is about not working for your employer, but the company car benefit continues to apply as it is based on availability rather than actual usage. Therefore, we would not expect employers to make the use of the vehicle illegal, by (say) cancelling the insurance or registering it as SORN etc. and, therefore, the car should still be available for actual use in line with the Government restrictions.

Nigel Morris, tax director, MHA

Q Can I ask my drivers to undertake additional training while they are furloughed? eLearning for example?

A Yes. Furloughed employees can engage in training, provided in undertaking the training, the employee does not provide services to, or generate revenue for, or on behalf of their organisation or a linked or associated organisation.

Where training is undertaken by furloughed employees, at the request of their employer, they are entitled to be paid at least their appropriate national minimum wage for this time. Where the time spent training attracts a minimum wage entitlement in excess of the furlough payment, employers will need to pay the additional wages and cannot claim that 'top up' as part of the furlough claim grant.

Nigel Morris, tax director, MHA

Q Please would you clarify what we can do with regard to our drivers not incurring benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax if they are not using their company vehicle?

A As an employer, where you believe that the employee will not be able to use the car for 30 consecutive days due to lockdown, you should seek the employee's agreement to the withdrawal of the car and the 'virtual' return of it to you.

You will need to show that the employee has returned the keys to the business premises and that you have received them.

The employee can then go to their online tax account and amend the benefit provision section to reflect the withdrawal. You will also need to update your internal HR, payroll and BIK and systems to ensure the correct future P11D BIK reporting and Class 1A NIC calculations are undertaken.

There will be a reverse process when the car is 'reinstated' and keys returned and the need to update HMRC and employer records for tax and NIC purposes again.

You need to think carefully, however, about the practicalities of this. Consider the health and safety aspects of a vehicle being outside an employee's home or on their driveway and any potential issues with moving the vehicle in case of emergency or for emergency services access, as well as general maintenance.

This may need the support of your fleet management provider and or lease provider to

ensure proper duty of care is applied and unnecessary impacts on the vehicles or services are avoided which may result in additional costs or charges for the business e.g. recovery call-outs, flat batteries, flat tyres, seized brakes etc.

Where there is no car benefit there can be no private fuel benefit either, as the fuel benefit attaches to the car.

Even if a car benefit is not withdrawn, the private fuel benefit can be. This does not need a physical return of the fuel card, but it will need a change of policy and employee agreement.

However, private fuel benefits are based on:

- A full tax year calculation;
- This is then reduced proportionately if the car is unavailable for part of the year; and
- It can also be reduced if free fuel is withdrawn in a tax year and not reinstated.

Nigel Morris, tax director, MHA

VEHICLES

Q If you have missed or extended your PMI (periodic maintenance inspection), how do you go about booking them into an ATF (authorised testing facility) assuming they will be busy or even closed to take the booking?

A Advice on extending and freezing/unfreezing PMIs has been provided by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner. There is also a link to this guidance from the Driving for Better Business Covid-19 Transport Toolkit.

FTA Policy Team

Q Are the lease and rental companies providing any assistance to stand-down vehicles?

A Leasing companies are having individual discussions with customers about formal and informal extensions of vehicle contracts at no additional cost, with pro-rata extension of mileages. Some have also adapted their SMR processes to help keep essential fleets running. www.fleetnews.co.uk/news/fleet-industry-news/2020/03/30/coronavirus-leasing-industry-vows-to-help-fleets-during-pandemic. Meanwhile, rental companies have taken action to improve their cleaning processes among other actions – <https://www.fleetnews.co.uk/news/fleet-industry-news/2020/04/03/coronavirus-rental-industry-adapts-to-covid-19-pandemic>.

Stephen Briers, editor-in-chief, Fleet News

Q What are your recommendations for keeping vans and cars in good operational condition with the batteries charged?

A If you can, at least every couple of weeks, start the engine and run for around a quarter of an hour to get up to operating temperature, but don't leave the vehicle unattended. This will provide some charge top up. Move the car to prevent the tyre becoming flat-tened where it stands and run the air conditioning too, to circulate the gas.

Peter Golding, managing director, FleetCheck

SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATING FOCUSES ON THE 'WHY', NOT JUST THE 'WHAT'

Fleet management consultant *Colin Tourick* considers how fleets and leasing companies can work together to protect their businesses during the Covid-19 crisis

We sighed simultaneously, looked up and smiled wryly. They had just announced yet another hour's delay to our flight. So, I did what no Brit ever does: started talking to a complete stranger.

Turned out he was an American businessman going home at the end of a work trip. "Successful?" I asked. "Definitely," he said, with a broad smile.

He owned a mediation organisation, working with governments, helping to resolve disputes between nations. He'd been doing this for 30 years.

"Well, we're not going anywhere for at least the next hour," I said. "Any tips you can give me?" He smiled and said he didn't need an hour.

"Most people go into a negotiation saying what they want, but rarely explain why they need it. If I'm thinking about my wants and needs, I'll negotiate hard. You're doing the same. It's a zero-sum game. What I gain you lose," he said.

"However, things change if I tell you why I need a particular outcome. Human brains are geared to finding solutions. You'll start thinking about my needs as well as your own. You'll get creative. Maybe you'll realise there's something you could offer that we haven't discussed that would deliver value to me, cost you little and make your overall offer more acceptable. Two brains are now working on solving my problem. That's the key to dispute resolution."

I've often had cause to thank this stranger for his sage advice and thought about him during the



recent *Fleet News* webinar on how companies are managing their fleets during the current crisis. Many participants had vehicles parked up, with drivers furloughed or working from home. They were paying for vehicles they were not using.

I know that some fleet managers have been trying to negotiate payment deferrals with their leasing companies over the past few weeks, with varying degrees of success.

So, with those words of sage advice still in my ears, let's consider some of the issues facing fleet managers and those facing leasing companies. By understanding each other's needs, rather than wants, perhaps they can work together to devise tailor-made solutions to alleviate some of the pain so many businesses are feeling at present.

DEAR FLEET MANAGER...

I'll assume that yours is not an 'essential' business in a 'keyworker' sector; you lease your vehicles on three-four year contract hire with maintenance, many are standing idle, your business has stalled because of the lockdown and you have claimed all you can under the Government's schemes and need to preserve cash.

Your leasing company is faced with problems on all sides. They make a tiny margin on each lease

and rely on volume to make a profit, but new business has dried up. They also hope to make a profit when selling ex-lease vehicles, but used vehicle prices are under pressure. They know that some of their clients will not survive the crisis, large numbers of vehicles will be returned and they will make a loss when selling these.

At the moment, your leasing company is saving money on the maintenance on your laid-up vehicles, but those savings will be dwarfed by the hit they'll take from the fall in used vehicle prices. And any Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) proposal to freeze personal contract payments will hit them hard, as PCP and PCH have been growth areas for leasing companies recently.

Leasing companies are highly-gearred: lots of debt, not too much equity. It doesn't take much of a downturn to damage their capital. While many belong to larger groups – banks, motor manufacturers, motor dealerships – those businesses are also suffering. So, when they insist you pay rentals for vehicles that are standing idle, they're doing so from necessity.

DEAR LEASING COMPANY ACCOUNT MANAGER...

When your client comes to ask you for help over during the crisis, they are doing so out of necessity at a time of stress.

Fleet managers tend to be busy people but the lockdown has added new burdens, such as how to ensure driver wellbeing is maintained despite workload increases (in 'essential' businesses), dealing with furloughed drivers' concerns about being charged benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax for cars that can't be driven because of lockdown, the sanitisation of multiple-shift vehicles between shifts, and so on.

Meanwhile, their finance directors are insisting they find ways to reduce fleet costs – often the third largest item of expenditure after people and premises costs – and, in particular, to preserve cash.

If you can find a way to help them, they'll be more likely to be around in future to pay your rentals and order new cars.

No one knows how long this crisis is going to last. I think it will take more than a year for stability to return, though it will be a new normal with lower GDP. Once we're out of this, leasing companies will hope to resume trading normally. People tend to remember those who help them when times get tough. Goodwill is a fragile thing: hard to win, easy to lose.

START TALKING

So, my first piece of advice is for both parties to talk. Don't just set out what you want but why you need it. Seek out ways – creative ways – to help meet each others' needs. It's not a good time to dig your heels in and be inflexible.

If I was a fleet manager in an 'essential' business, I wouldn't now be asking my leasing company to recalculate my lease rentals based on lower

“THE REAL PROBLEM FOR A FLEET MANAGER COMES WHEN STAFF ARE MADE REDUNDANT AND THEIR VEHICLE IS SIMPLY NO LONGER NEEDED”

mileage. Any saving would be marginal and would be outweighed by the reduction in used vehicle values the leasing company would want – need – to build into the rental calculation.

Instead, I'd ask them to reduce my rental payments for the next three months by a very significant percentage and I'd agree to pay back the shortfall in the final three months of the lease.

Leasing companies are about to suffer pain, so I'd also offer now to extend all leases due to end in 2020 by six months, and in 2021 by three months, with rentals unchanged, and give each party the option to extend for a further three months.

That would help me – I certainly wouldn't be adding new vehicles to my fleet any time soon – while also helping the leasing company and allowing time for the used vehicle market to recover.

The real problem for a fleet manager comes when staff are made redundant and their vehicle is simply no longer needed. No one is in the mood to pay early termination fees, but the leasing company needs these if it is to clear its books.

So, if I was a fleet manager, I'd ask for these payments to be deferred by nine-12 months. Yes, I'd accept the liability, but I'd want to preserve my company's cash during the crisis. And the quid pro quo for this? I'd need to find something to offer that the leasing company would value and I can afford.

Here's an example.

Leasing companies spend an awful lot of time, effort and money whenever they pitch to win a new client or to retain an existing one. So, as a quid pro quo for deferring the payment of early termination fees, I'd offer them my loyalty – a commitment that for the next three years they will have all of my business.

If they don't currently have sole supply of my fleet, I'd guarantee to order from them every time one of their vehicles comes off lease. I would, of course, want to build in some safeguards here to ensure that rentals don't go sky high (recognising that rentals are likely to go up anyway because the recent reduction in interest rates was miniscule compared with the sharp reduction in used vehicle prices we're about to see).

Difficult times need different thinking. It's time for a good conversation with your leasing company.



OBTAINING VALUABLE CASH IN THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Darren Hodson of Smith Cooper Corporate Finance comments on wide-ranging Government initiatives available to the fleet and leasing sector

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the globally integrated automotive sector significantly, exposing challenges never experienced before. The pandemic continues to disrupt business as usual and leasing companies have been hit hard. Many of their customers have paused trading and assume that they can automatically defer lease costs. If they do, there is very little redress, and this means there is a knock-on impact on debt providers to those leasing companies. Cash, as ever, is king.

This article provides a comprehensive guide to Covid-19 Government funding initiatives that are available for those operating in a sector facing pressure. The flow chart aims at highlighting the breadth of areas available from the Government that can provide much-needed cash.

GETTING THE CASH YOU NEED THROUGH GOVERNMENT LOAN SCHEMES

Alongside furloughing, the clearest route for additional funding is through one of the loan schemes. These schemes are changing daily.

It is important to understand that these are not Government loans. The funds are provided by the banks/lenders directly – the Government is guaranteeing the loans.

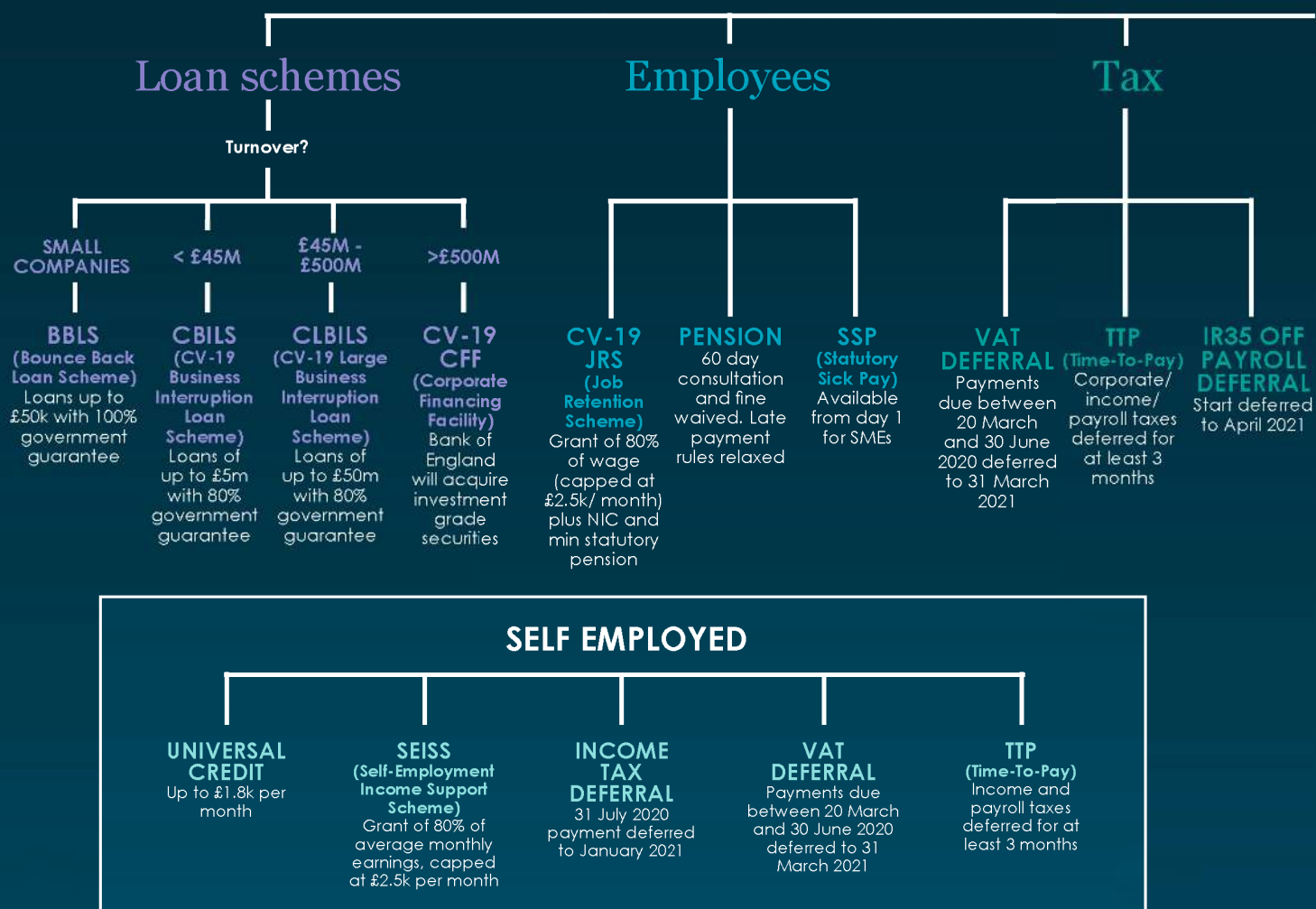
Applying for a loan is very much dependent on each lender's own criteria and there are even significant variations between different relationship managers within the same institutions.

Banks have experienced a colossal increase in loan applications since the schemes were launched – 15-20 times the norm. This has led to a backlog of responses – the lenders just do not have the capacity. It is also the case that small

loans, those that are higher risk, are the biggest volume of applicants. Hopefully, the Government has improved this by introducing the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (began 4 May). This provides a 100% guarantee for any loan up to £50,000. This will help deploy funds to sole traders quickly and many applicants have already received money within 12 hours of applying. Importantly, as loans are provided through an online portal, it will remove a significant administrative burden from the banks.

For most in the leasing sector, the main loan schemes available are CBILS and CLBILS. They are similar schemes.

Importantly, there has been a few fundamental changes to how these work in the past few days. So, even if you have been rejected for these loans in the past, the British Business Bank is now recommending companies reapply.



CBILS (Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme – British Business Bank)

- Applicable to businesses with turnover less than £45 million.
- Loans of up to £5m with 80% Government guarantee.
- Available in the form of business loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance.
- The first 12 months of interest and lender-levied fees are covered.
- More than 40 accredited lenders.

The Government has removed the need for lenders to apply a forward-looking test to obtain the guarantee. Banks no longer are required to assess forecasts to assess the viability of a business! However, as it is still the banks' own funds that are being lent – and some of that money is at risk – the use of such a test will remain at their discretion, meaning they may wish to review on a case-by-case basis.

CLBILS (Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme – British Business Bank)

- Applicable to businesses with turnover between £45m-£500m.
- Loans of up to £200m (extended this month from the original £50m) with 80% Government guarantee.
- Available in the form of business loans, overdrafts, invoice finance and asset finance.
- Repayment terms of up to three years.

Given the complexity of lending within the leasing sector, our advice is that you should still produce forecasts to ensure the viability of your own business. Security and personal guarantees can still be requested (for loans above £250,000). Crucially, businesses must be able to justify that the funding required is because of legitimate business interruption, and not for other reasons.

If you are rejected by your incumbent funder, other debt providers are still available.

UTILISING TAX MEASURES FOR FINANCIAL FLUIDITY

There are other Government-backed schemes that can help cashflows. We highlight some here:

Research and Development Tax Credits

Some fleet companies invest in technology around vehicle tracking, maintenance software, development of specialist vehicles, or CRM software. There could be arguments for a corporation tax reclaim for these elements. If you claim R&D, we recommend submitting claims quickly; if you do not, you should check if you qualify, as you may be able to obtain a backlog of overpaid tax.

VAT deferral

If you are a UK VAT-registered business and have a VAT payment due between March 20, 2020, and June 30, 2020, you have the option to defer the payment until March 31, 2021. VAT refunds and reclaims will be paid by the Government as normal



By Darren Hodson
Partner, Smith Cooper

Darren Hodson is a partner in Smith Cooper's award-winning Corporate Finance division. Equipped with more than 20 years of experience, Hodson advises clients on a range of corporate finance matters including raising finance, acquisitions, management buyouts, corporate disposals, and strategic reviews, driving tangible results. He is a specialist in the automotive sector and has a deep understanding of the leasing sector through many M&A transactions. Smith Cooper is a boutique accounting practice that has a large base of automotive clients.

TTP (Time-To-Pay)

In addition to VAT, for all other taxes (e.g. corporation tax, PAYE, national insurance), you can contact HMRC and ask for time-to-pay. You will be charged interest on amounts deferred and we recommend you think about a repayment plan before speaking to HMRC as it improves your chances of success.

Loss carry back claims

In the event of a trading loss, companies can seek relief by carrying the loss back to a previous profit-making period and reclaim the corporation tax from that period (this can include capital allowances). This needs to be within the past 12-month accounting period, where the company was carrying on the same trade. However, you can change your year-end to potentially accelerate the loss relief.

Innovate UK grant

The Government has also launched a £750m Covid-19 ideas grant scheme, whereby 80% of the cost of projects which seek to mitigate the impact of CV-19 can be reclaimed. Those in the automotive sector may have opportunities here.

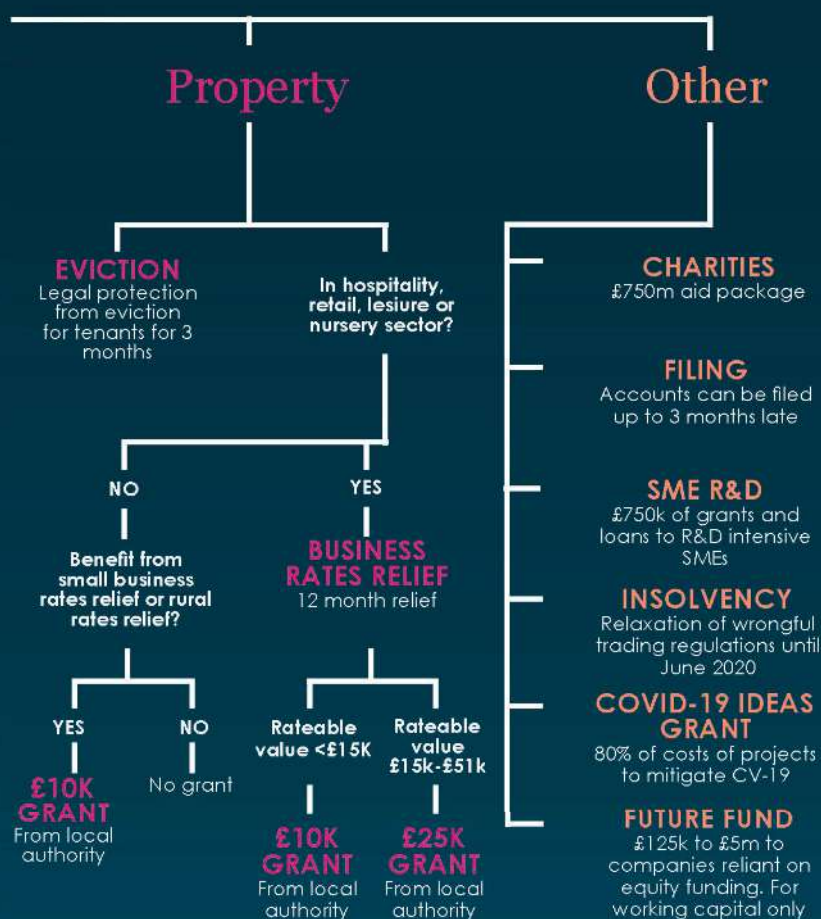
STEPS TO PRESERVE BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Our recommendation for obtaining funding is to plan ahead and act early, providing the funder with, among other things, information on pre-Covid performance, measures implemented to preserve cash and jobs, and a forecast showing how the business can trade out of the crisis while servicing the existing and new debt burden.

Optimise working capital whilst identifying and implementing measures that lessen the pressure on cash flow. Identify sources of collateral that may secure access to additional borrowing and engage with active scenario planning that reflects the current level of market uncertainty.

Essentially, during this unprecedented time, you need to demonstrate you are in control of each of the aspects that fall within your control and influence, and that you are taking all possible action to take up all available reliefs and grants and minimise cash leakage.

Smith Cooper is tracking all Covid-19 Government initiatives and further information can be found on (<https://www.smithcooper.co.uk/news-insights/covid-19-support-for-businesses/>).





Different routes to introducing electric vehicles

Some see hybrids as a stepping stone while others prefer to wait for a full EV solution

By Matt de Prez

Electric and low emission vehicles are a priority for fleet operators as businesses are placed under increasing pressure to reduce emissions.

Making the switch to electric vehicles (EVs) was a key part of the discussion at the most recent *Fleet News* round table, sponsored by Škoda UK.

The introduction of Clean Air Zones (CAZs) in certain UK cities will penalise operators that don't have Euro 6 diesel and Euro 4 petrol vehicles, while planned zero emission zones in some areas will require fleets to introduce EVs for charge-free access.

Meanwhile, company car drivers are motivated to switch to greener vehicles to avoid ever-increasing benefit-in-kind (BIK) costs. The allure of electric cars is becoming much stronger, but supply remains a problem.

Electric vans could save businesses significant sums, but the upfront investment and concerns about the available battery range on models currently available is a big factor preventing an immediate switch.

Fleet News: How are you adapting your fleet to prepare for the introduction of CAZs?

Steve Winter, head of fleet at Centrica: If we kept our fleet replacement programme as it was,

our exposure to Clean Air Zones would be about £5 million. We have about 5,500 Euro 5 vehicles on our fleet. To replace them all, the expenditure is immense.

Now we've got a really strong ambition for EVs, we've already joined EV100.

Getting the Euro 5s off is a priority, those assets are toxic from a leasing company point of view because the RVs aren't as strong as initially expected.

We have made an agreement with our funder to replace all our Euro 5s at no cost. We are well on the way to replacing them all.

Our problem has been we haven't found enough EVs to replace them. We shortened our leases to three years, that drops our replacement in line with when we think there will be more EVs for us. Our fleet will change significantly over the next three years. By the end of the year we'll be fully Euro 6, then we'll be dropping all the Euro 6s for EVs in three years.

FN: Are EVs high on the agenda?

Anthony Meehan, corporate sustainability office (travel), Bath & North Somerset Council: If you look back 12 months, the average van driver would laugh at the idea of having an EV. Now they want them.

Steve Winter: We went out to our workforce and asked who wants an EV? Out of 10,000 drivers, more than 1,200 came back saying "yes



please". For us to buy 1,200 EVs that's a challenge. We've got more drivers than we've got vehicles. There is a North/South divide. Our engineers living in London or the South-East counties are less likely to have a driveway (for home charging). The employees living further out from cities are more likely to have a driveway, but that isn't where the low-emission zones are – so we end up with all these EVs in the wrong places.

Denise Hawkins, fleet manager, ABM UK: With the LCV fleet it's so much more difficult to switch to EV. Our drivers don't have the capability to charge at home. We want to, but our hands are tied.

Jonathan Brown, fleet & facilities executive manager, Princebuild: Electric commercial vehicles don't have the range we require. We have some EVs and we are expanding the number of charging points to four at each branch.

Shaun Atton, group fleet manager, Auto Windscreens: We started installing charging points at our sites two years ago, but we put a

stop on it because the EV market seemed to stop. We've started back up again now, but the usage is very minimal – we weren't getting use at 80% of them.

Steve Winter: It's highly likely that in future our work deployment system will be scheduling a break for an engineer and trying to match it up to a charging point.

Nigel Morris, electric vehicle integration manager, Active Building Centre – Swansea University: As a smaller fleet we have more flexibility and we've got a fully electric fleet. Certain places have much better charging facilities, Milton Keynes for example. Charging hubs will be the answer for people with no off-street parking. We've made vans work on a 120-mile back-to-base radius. If we're out on the public infrastructure you have to do a bit of training, but it can be done at least for a small fleet.

Stewart Taylor, fleet manager, Police Scotland: It's very high on our agenda. As a public body we have to be seen as leading the way. In Scotland, we are developing a bluelight



charging network – we have a much better opportunity as we have one police, one fire and one ambulance service. Our target is to introduce around 500 electric vehicles to the fleet by November; currently we've got 26. Collaboration is key. You have to bring all the various departments together it make it happen but also work with external partners, including charging providers.

FN: What about plug-in hybrids (PHEVs)?

Stewart Taylor: We see hybrid very much as a short-term solution. If someone drives it on the engine (rather than the battery), it's probably worse than a Euro 6 diesel. We are delaying the switch with roads policing and putting the faith in manufacturers that they will have a fully electric solution for us soon, rather than looking at using PHEVs.

Steve Winter: I see PHEV as a stepping stone to full electric. Some of the range anxieties that my drivers have got will not let them choose an EV but the PHEV will get them used to plugging in every night. You can't

overlook the tax advantages. We don't have a CO₂ cap, yet our average is 80g/km because people are already choosing those low emission vehicles for the tax.

FN: Are you providing training for drivers with electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles?

Rory Morgan, head of logistics support – Western Europe, Iron Mountain: There is a slightly different driving style required for an electric van because there is a difference on the telematics score if you get the same driver to drive a diesel van.

Anthony Meehan: We offer it as part of an incentive package to move our grey fleet into our pool vehicles, which a percentage of are hybrid and EV. A trainer comes in and we have a leader board for the most improved driver.

Jonathan Brown: You drive with better space management if you learn to use the regen feature properly. When you approach junctions and roundabouts, you're more aware as you want to keep it moving and not stop.

ATTENDEES

- 1 Shane Staley**, fleet manager, Nottingham City Council
- 2 Rory Morgan**, head of logistics support – Western Europe, Iron Mountain
- 3 Shaun Atton**, group fleet manager, Auto Windscreens
- 4 Claire Marsden**, principal global category manager, Vodafone
- 5 Steve Hopkins**, area fleet manager, Skoda UK
- 6 Steve Winter**, head of fleet, Centrica
- 7 Jonathan Brown**, fleet & facilities executive manager, Princebuild
- 8 Stephen Briers**, editor-in-chief, *Fleet News*
- 9 Stewart Taylor**, fleet manager, Police Scotland
- 10 Denise Hawkins**, fleet manager, ABM UK
- 11 Anthony Meehan**, corporate sustainability office (travel), Bath & North Somerset Council
- 12 Yulia Eldridge**, area fleet manager, Skoda UK
- 13 Matt de Prez**, senior staff writer, *Fleet News*

Also present:

- Steve Openshaw**, group fleet & transport manager, Eric Wright Group
- Nigel Morris**, electric vehicle integration manager, Active Building Centre – Swansea University

FN: Is anyone facing pressure to offer alternatives to cars?

Rory Morgan: Our UK fleet is car allowance. We haven't audited people, but when we were looking at going to company cars there is a huge population that want to stick with the cash. A lot of people don't have cars – some don't even drive!

Shaun Atton: At our London locations lots of starters are turning down the company car option now.

Anthony Meehan: We've taken parking permits away. Some people are very upset about it,

while others are looking for alternatives. People will move. There is either a big carrot or you hit them with a big stick. Mobility as a Service is a growing thing, especially in urban areas. People are looking at those options and asking if they can get a benefit-in-kind to use the bus or the tube or other forms of transport.

Nigel Morris: Those of Generation Z don't want a car – admittedly mainly in a city – but they want better transport, integrated and suitable to their requirements at the time.

FORD KUGA

Third generation model holds its own as it enters an already crowded sector

By Keith W R Jones

Now in its third generation, the Ford Kuga looks much more closely aligned to the Ford Focus it shares its underpinnings with than either of its predecessors.

The softer, less rugged, styling may not appeal to all tastes, but the advent of electrification to the range, supplementing the regular petrol- and diesel-engined choices, should give the Kuga renewed appeal to fleets.

In this corner of the market, the competition is strong, with Kuga facing numerous alternatives including – but not limited to – Kia's Sportage, the soon-to-be-replaced Nissan Qashqai, the Peugeot 3008, Seat's Ateca and closely-related Škoda Karoq, plus Vauxhall's Grandland X.

Even more intriguingly is the Kuga's smaller sibling, the Puma, which is already enjoying rave reviews.

Ford's designers have long had a handle on making its cars fit for family life and the third-generation Kuga is a fine exponent of this.

There's a raft of varied, usefully sized cubby holes around the interior, including a lidded centre console locker, with a moveable shelf, a smartphone-sized space in front of the gearlever with a wireless charging plate available on many models, plus deep door bins with moulded innards to help hold a multitude of detritus.

It's a similar tale in the back, where three average-sized adults will be able to get comfy, with decent head- and legroom. All Kugas feature a 60:40 split rear seat which can be slid backwards

and forwards, as well as have the angle of the backrest reclined.

Dependent on how the space is configured, the Kuga offers between 412 litres in five-seat mode and up to 1,534 litres when the rear seats are folded over.

There's a familiar trim level structure of the Mk3 Kuga range. Zetec and Titanium fulfil the mainstream briefs, with ST-Line and ST-Line X being the sportier options. For those hankering after a plusher experience, the flagship Kuga Vignale is the one to go for.

Inside, the Kuga is very like a Focus, essentially sharing the same dashboard. That means a very simple-to-use design with a standalone tablet-like touchscreen for the multimedia system, but in a functional setting.

It's just a pity that it's so unyieldingly black inside the Kuga, with no variation of trim and upholstery colour save for the scarlet stitching on the ST-Line models. It's all a bit gloomy.

Naturally, for a family-focused SUV that achieved a five-star Euro NCAP rating, all Kugas come with autonomous emergency braking (AEB), lane-departure warning, parking sensors front and rear, an electrically-heated windscreen and seven airbags, plus there's a raft of optional safety gear, too.

The engine line-up kicks off with a 120PS version of Ford's 1.5-litre EcoBoost petrol. This is only available with Zetec trim and is primarily offered due to its low price of £24,020. A six-speed manual gearbox and front-wheel drive is all that's available here.

An upgraded 150PS version offers more spritely performance, but both powertrains have CO₂ emissions of more than 150g/km and only return around 40mpg.



The latest version of the Kuga has softer, less rugged styling



FORD'S
DESIGNERS HAVE
LONG HAD A
HANDLE ON
MAKING ITS CARS
FIT FOR FAMILY
LIFE

Diesel models are more efficient. The entry-level 120PS 1.5-litre EcoBlue emits from 134g/km and can achieve 55mpg, with a starting price of £26,170.

It's the electrified models that have the most fleet appeal, however. The 2.0-litre mild-hybrid diesel develops a respectable 150PS and emits 132g/km in Zetec trim.

In essence, it uses a beefed-up stop-start system that's capable of turning the engine off at low speeds or when acceleration's not required to improve fuel efficiency – up to 56.5mpg on paper.

The plug-in hybrid (PHEV) version uses a 2.5-litre petrol engine and an electric motor to produce 225PS. Performance-wise that equates to a 9.2-second 0-62mph time.

Despite having a large petrol engine, the official WLTP efficiency figures are 201.8mpg and 32g/km of CO₂.

Charging the PHEV's 14.4kWh lithium-ion battery takes around three-and-a-half hours on a dedicated wallbox. However, use up all that electricity – it'll travel around 35 miles on electric-only – and you'll be very lucky to see anything closer to 40mpg. It could prove quite thirsty on longer trips.

Quickest of all the Kugas is the only one fitted with four-wheel drive – the 2.0-litre EcoBlue, with the 0-62mph time drops to a speedy 8.7 seconds but emissions climb to 155g/km.

Just as the Focus remains one of the best-handling cars in the compact family car arena, so it is with the Mk3 Kuga in the family SUV market. But, as with the Focus, the competition has caught up considerably.

For instance, while the Kuga's steering is still communicative, giving the driver a decent amount of feedback about traction and road conditions, it's not as sharp a signal as it was before, and the weighting is a touch light for enthusiastic drivers.

The Kuga does well to absorb much of the sharpness out of rough road surfaces, and – in traditional Ford manner – damping is well controlled, too. Overall, this allows the Kuga to remain composed and relatively flat through corners, but rarely giving a sense of floatiness that might make some occupants feel unwell.

	ENTRY LEVEL 1.5T EcoBoost 120 Zetec	PLUG IN 2.5 PHEV Titanium	FLEET PICK 2.0 EcoBlue MHEV 150 Zetec
SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£24,020	£33,030	£27,180
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	152	32	132
Monthly BIK tax* (20%)	33%/£132	10%/£55	33%/£166
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	42.2	201.8	56.5
Fuel cost (ppm)	11.8	8.9	9
Annual VED	£540 then £150	£0 then £140	£540 then £150
Class 1A NIC	£1,094	£456	£1,238
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£9,450/39%	£12,025/36%	£9,975/36%
AFR (ppm)	14	20	11
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	34.7ppm	40ppm	35.4ppm

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

RIVALS



NISSAN QASHQAI
1.7dCi N-Connecta



SEAT ATECA
2.0TDI SE



KIA SPORTAGE
1.6CRDi MHEV 2

SPECIFICATIONS			
P11D Price	£27,735	£26,565	£26,370
CO ₂ emissions (g/km)	145	143	141
Monthly BIK tax (20%)	36%/£166	35%/£157	35%/£153
Fuel efficiency (mpg)	51.4	50.4	52.3
Fuel cost (ppm)	9.9	10.1	9.7
Annual VED	£540 then £150	£540 then £150	£540 then £150
Class 1A NIC	£1,378	£1,283	£1,274
Residual value (4yrs/80k)	£7,150/26%	£7,700/29%	£8,450/32%
AFR (ppm)	11	11	11
Running cost (4yrs/80k)	39.7ppm	37.8ppm	36.3ppm



ST-Line models have lower, stiffer Sports suspension. By and large it's fine, dealing with initial bumps well, but minor road imperfections are frequently transmitted to occupants' posteriors a bit too readily, albeit without harshness.

For the majority of SUV customers, the latest-generation Kuga is a fine choice: plusher than a Qashqai, more practical than a Sportage and

better handling than an Ateca.

But, it's not a clear-cut victory, not least because the styling is somewhat awkward from some angles. It lacks the visual zest of the equally new, but a mite smaller, Ford Puma.

The Kuga handles impressively, it's roomy and very easy to live with.

But if you can sacrifice on space a little, the



AUDI A8L

Flagship model's output gives this Audi an advantage over its key rivals

By Matt de Prez

The good old days of luxury saloons being fitted with large capacity petrol engines seems like an all-too-distant memory as the drive for efficiency has meant cars like the Audi A8 are most commonly bought with a diesel engine.

As advanced as modern diesels have become, they don't quite capture the same level of refinement as their petrol counterparts. While there is no doubting the effectiveness of a diesel for long distance, many of these long-wheelbase luxury saloons spend their days ferrying executives around the city. It's in slow moving traffic that diesels become lumbering. Lurching into life as the start-stop system engages, making the whole experience a bit less premium.

That's where a plug-in hybrid powertrain comes into its own. It offers seamless, silent, emissions-free running in the city and without the range concerns of a large electric car.

Mercedes-Benz and BMW are already producing such models, with the S560e and 745e. Now, Audi is joining the club with its A8 60 TFSi e.

With a larger platform for storing batteries and motors, these luxury saloons don't make do with small, revvy engines to spoil refinement. They use large, silky smooth six-cylinder units.

In the A8, a 3.0-litre turbocharged V6 petrol engine mates with an electric motor to develop 449PS and 700Nm. It's an impressive output and gives the four-wheel drive Audi an advantage over its key rivals, with a sub-five-second 0-60mph acceleration time.

While such performance may seem unnecessary, let's not forget this is a car that costs £88,000. It's the flagship model, therefore it must excel in all areas.

A 14.1kWh battery provides a range of roughly 28 miles, which can be maximised when the navigation system is active – the car analyses the route to pick the ideal moments to switch to electric.

The upshot is CO₂ emissions of 58g/km, or 60g/km on our long-wheelbase test model.

As a company car, the plug-in hybrid could save 40% taxpayers more than £5,000 per year when compared with the A8 50 TDI, which is also much slower.

The A8 is more discreet than its ostentatiously styled rivals. It flies under the radar, with a focus on refinement and build quality rather than overt luxury.

For the driver, there's Audi's virtual cockpit, 10.1-inch MMI infotainment screen and a third touch-screen for controlling the air conditioning and other features. All three offer outstanding clarity and usability, although we would like to see a return of the rotary infotainment controller to make usage on the move a little easier.

The interior is typically Germanic. There is less theatre than in an S-Class but everything feels exceptionally solid and well finished.

Our test car is fitted with the optional Rear



“WHEN YOU DO REQUIRE PETROL POWER THERE IS A MUTED GROWL FROM UNDER THE BONNET”

WARDY'S WORLD

By Martin Ward



Who could have predicted anything like this pandemic and the chaos it has caused?

Many words have been spoken about it and one that keep recurring is unprecedented. So, during this unprecedented time, what will happen in our industry, the motor industry so many rely on to make a living and to pay the bills.

This time I would like to concentrate on new cars. Next time will be on used cars when things might be a bit clearer, and we know a bit more about used car values.

Manufacturing new cars will, like everything else, be a slow ramp-up. Once the all-clear is given for plants to open, it will take some time for the supply chain to get moving.

There will, unfortunately, be some casualties at suppliers, whether small or large. It only takes a supplier, who makes one part, to go out of business and the supply chain is instantly broken. Other suppliers will eventually be able to make and supply that part, but it will need testing and will need approval.

Once the button is pressed to start production, it could take weeks for full manufacturing to start.

Then we have Model Year (MY). Manufacturers might bring MY forward on start-up, so new parts will be needed, especially if it involves body panels, front grilles or changes to the interior. Some might carry on with the current MY, and maybe miss the next one and skip to a future MY either on time and as scheduled or bring it forward.

This could have a knock-on effect on residual values as a consequence as getting the changes to all concerned and doing launches or events to show off the new facelifted model will not happen.

So any important improvements and changes could get lost in the system, and nobody will recognise the changes either now or in the future.

Manufacturers will have to work doubly hard to explain any MY changes or facelifts to the leasing and fleet industry.

But the motor industry will not be the only one affected. Just about every industry will suffer similarly, the exception being those which have kept going and kept us going through this terrible time such as food suppliers, shops, delivery, fuel stations and all those wonderful frontline workers.

2020 was going to be the year of WLTP and electric vehicles (EVs) but these letters now mean something different, World Lockdown Terrible Pandemic, or Evil/Enemy Virus.

Take care, and stay safe.



The screens in the Audi offer outstanding usability and clarity



The A8L is designed to give rear seat passengers the best possible experience

Comfort Pack (£2,195), which includes electrically adjustable reclining rear seats and the Chauffeur Pack (£2,995) adding infotainment screens in the rear, TV and an armrest-mounted touchscreen for passengers to control a range of car functions from climate to the ambient lighting.

While the A8L is clearly geared towards giving the rear seat passenger the best possible experience, the driving experience is still positive.

Air suspension keeps the ride supple, but can be firmed up by choosing the 'Dynamic' drive mode. This lowers the car and gives full power from both the engine and electric motor.

It's not the most dynamic car in the sector, that accolade belongs to the BMW, but the Audi is still enjoyable when required.

The electric motor is pokey enough to get the A8 shifting at a reasonable pace without the need to fire up the engine. When you do require petrol power there is a muted growl from under the bonnet as the view from the side window quickly becomes more blurred.

We have noticed the automatic gearbox sometimes has a tendency to hold gears a tad too long and sometimes takes a second to decide what it's actually doing, but the addition of the electric motor means acceleration isn't really affected.

When it comes to fuel consumption, the A8 has also impressed. It managed more than 40mpg

under mixed use in our hands. Diesel versions usually manage mid-30s.

When using the car just for short trips it is able to run on the motor alone, making the 108mpg official figure more attainable.

Diesel is still the way to go for those that are doing substantial mileages, but the A8 TFSI e makes a lot of sense for those operating in urban areas. Not only is it greener and more cost effective, but its smoother and quieter like its petrol-powered forefathers.

FLEET PICK A8L 60 TFSI E

SPECIFICATIONS	
P11D Price	£88,125
Monthly BIK (20%)	15%/£440
Class 1A NIC	£1,824
Annual VED	£15 then £465
RV (4yr/80k)	£21,675/24.6%
Fuel cost	n/a
AFR	20ppm
Running cost (4yr/80k)	n/a
CO ₂	60g/km
Fuel efficiency	108mpg



▶ LEXUS UX FINAL TEST

250H TAKUMI

By Matt de Prez

Lexus was late to the party in launching a compact SUV, and its timing may be a little too late as the fleet appeal of such vehicles has taken a significant hit following the switch to WLTP CO₂ figures.

The UX is no exception, with the range now emitting from 121g/km. Thanks to its hybrid powertrain, it has fared better than some of its rivals – cars like the BMW X2 diesel now emit close to 150g/km.

During our four-month test, we've averaged

42mpg in the UX – impressive considering its 2.0-litre petrol engine.

The place it really shines is on sort urban trips, where most cars – petrol or diesel – really struggle. I could easily get more than 40mpg on my short commute through Peterborough, while our BMW 118i test car struggles to achieve 30mpg.

Priced at more than £40,000, our range-topping Takumi model comes fitted with a multitude of features including adaptive cruise control, electrically adjustable, heated and cooled front



seats, a 360-degree camera system and a panoramic sunroof.

It feels upmarket inside, as you'd expect from a Lexus. The build quality is clearly very high, while the road and wind noise is minimal.

The UX also promises a more sporty drive than some other Lexus models, with a lower seating position and firmer suspension.

Keen drivers are unlikely to be won over though. The powertrain is not particularly engaging and becomes quite inefficient if you drive it hard.

My biggest gripe is with the car's digital experience. The sat-nav system is clunky and dated, while the partially digital instruments are messy and house a complicated trip computer.

Company car drivers looking for a car of this size might find the plug-in hybrid BMW X1 or Volvo XC40, both of which cost the same, but offer a better all-round package with lower BIK. Similarly, the top-spec Mazda CX-30 GT Sport is more engaging to drive and costs the same as the entry-level UX.

It's certainly a pleasurable car to live with. Will we miss it though? Probably not.



▶ AUDI A4

35 TDI TECHNIK

By Andrew Ryan

There is an expectation – and a need in a competitive sector – that premium cars not only feature plenty of advanced technologies, but that they are easy to access and use.

Our long-term Audi A4 certainly hits the mark on both these counts. An example is its digital instrument panel – Audi Virtual Cockpit Plus. Using a 12.3-inch TFT screen, it replaces the traditional dials for speed, rpm and other information with a display which can also be used to show navigation,

media and driver assistance systems.

The display is sharp with classy, clear graphics and provides a real feel-good factor to the driver. It also sets the tone for the rest of the cabin and the technology on offer.

This includes the infotainment system. Research by *What Car?* ranked Audi's system as the fourth least distracting to use (the top three, in order, were BMW's Live Cockpit Professional (see page 74), Mercedes-Benz's MBUX and Porsche's Connect Plus), and I'd agree that it is intuitive to operate.



However, it was another item of technology which pleased me the most in the past month: the electric hands-free boot opening system, fitted as part of the £1,395 comfort pack. This allows you to open the boot through a kicking movement below a sensor in the rear bumper.

I've driven cars fitted with this feature before. They tended not to work when I wanted them to, but when I didn't, the bootlid seemingly popped up all the time.

The Audi system has been far more consistent. For example, on a recent visit to pick up a click-and-collect order from a local garden centre, I walked back with a bag of compost cradled in both arms with plants balanced on top. Usually, I would have the inconvenience of grounding them and opening the boot manually. However, two kicks under the bumper and the boot opened as intended.

This feature is far from a must-have, but shows that, as with the Virtual Cockpit and infotainment system, the technology is great when it works properly and so far the range and usability of the A4's systems have been impressive.



▶ MAZDA3 SALOON

2.0 SPORT

By Gareth Roberts

The Mazda3's infotainment system offers company car drivers an impressive array of features and has been designed with road safety in mind.

Bluetooth, digital radio with an eight-speaker sound system, sat-nav and smartphone mirroring via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are standard.

Mazda's navigation system is also standard, with European mapping, alternative route calculations, point of interest search and five years' free map updates.

In addition, there are two USB ports and steering wheel-mounted audio and Bluetooth controls.

There are some extra toys if you stray above the entry-level SE-L trim. The Mazda3 is available in five trim levels – SE-L, SE-L Lux, Sport Lux, GT Sport and GT Sport Tech. Lux and GT models come with an MP3 player, while GT models also feature a 12-speaker Bose surround-sound system, with Bose CenterPoint, BassMatch and AudioPilot technology. The infotainment system is delivered via an 8.8-inch colour centre screen.

Mazda, however, has deliberately avoided employing a touchscreen, favoured by many of its rivals, in the interests of safety.

The manufacturer examined the time spent looking away from the road to make a screen selection, and the time needed to refocus the eyes on something close versus the road ahead. Recognising the potential impact touchscreens could have on road safety, it chose the Mazda3 to be the first model to carry a completely new system.

There is a bigger centre screen, which is angled towards the driver and slightly further away, that has been introduced to improve safety.

Instead of a touchscreen, the functionality is accessed via the Multimedia Commander, a rotary dial between the driver and front passenger, allowing easy control of the infotainment system.

Having experienced many other infotainment systems, Mazda's decision to deliberately steer clear of touchscreen technology is a welcome move.

Coupled with the increasing functionality of systems, it is also one rivals would do well to follow.



▶ VOLKSWAGEN CADDY

STARTLINE 2.0TDI DSG

By Trevor Gehlcken

They say every cloud has a silver lining and while there may not be many positives to the present coronavirus pandemic, one unforeseen plus is that it means I can keep the long-term Volkswagen Caddy test vehicle for a little longer than intended.

It was due to be swapped for the larger Crafter any time now but, along with most of the country, the VW press vehicle operation has virtually shut up shop and battened down the hatches trying to avoid unnecessary travel.

A quick call to the VW public relations department assured them that as long as the Caddy was with *Fleet News*, I would continue writing (glowing) reviews because this van ranks as one of the best I've ever driven in 30 years as an LCV motoring journalist – and that is saying something as it's currently on runout ready for a brand new model early in 2021.

Of course, I am not covering many miles at present – just trips to the local supermarket to stock up on necessities such as wine, but every

time I climb aboard, a grin spreads across my face as I revel in the sheer quality that this van exudes from every pore.

It's a delightful vehicle to drive too, especially with that DSG auto gearbox which saves me messing around with a clutch and gear lever.

I will be interested to see how much better the new Caddy is when it finally arrives as I really can't see how this present model could possibly be improved.

The only way it is bettered by newer rivals is in the official fuel economy stakes – the Caddy now lags some way behind, say, the Citroën Berlingo, Peugeot Partner and Vauxhall Combo trio.

But, what it lacks in fuel economy is more than made up for in build quality and safety features. For example, the anti-crash system which will automatically slam on the anchors and prevent an accident at under 30mph if one is detected as imminent.

It's standard across all VW vans now and the prevention of an accident will more than make up for any potential extra cost at the pumps.



▶ BMW 118i

M SPORT

By Matt de Prez

BMW's infotainment system was recently recognised as being the least distracting by car magazine *WhatCar?*, and I have to say it's one of my favourite systems of the current crop.

The crisp display provides excellent graphics and an easy-to-use menu system.

It can be controlled via the touchscreen, where it offers Apple-grade response and functionality, using the traditional rotary controller (my personal favourite) or by voice.

The voice command system recognises natural speech, so you don't have to memorise and recite a bunch of phrases in a robotic monotone. Instead,

simply say "Hey BMW, I'm Cold" or "play Craig David" and the system works out what you want and – for the most part – gets it right.

Our car's optional Technology 2 package (£1,500) increases the size of the infotainment screen from 8.8 inches to 10.25 and adds enhanced connected services, including real-time traffic, map updates and remote connectivity via the BMW app.

Using the app I can see the car's location on a map and remotely lock or unlock it. A round-the-clock concierge service is also provided. It can even help you find available parking spaces.

The pack also includes a Harman Kardon speaker system, which provides a fantastic audio experience.



▶ CITROËN C5 AIRCROSS

130 BLUEHDI FLAIR PLUS

By Luke Neal

After weeks of inactivity other than me running the engine for a few minutes every two weeks, the C5 Aircross has been called back into service for a much needed trip to the Norfolk coast for some (socially distanced) 'unlimited outdoor exercise'.

Good for the family but also good for the car which has sat gathering dust since lockdown began and, while my wife's BMW has a completely flat battery, there were no such problems for the Citroën.

Battery, tyres and brakes, the main items which could cause problems after extended periods of inactivity, were all in good shape.

It's worth pointing out that a good long run is important in a diesel car to give the DPF the opportunity to burn off any soot build up which could cause a problem later down the line.

Our 1.5l BlueHDI engine with eight speed automatic gearbox offers decent levels of power and refinement and is ideal for those drivers covering a variety of journey types, returning 58.6mpg and with a total running cost price of 39.14 pence per mile over four years/80,000 miles.

However, for those covering mostly short journeys the 1.2l PureTech petrol engine which returns 45.2mpg and has a total running cost price of 40.12ppm may be a better bet.

▶ VOLVO XC60

D4 MOMENTUM



By Stephen Briers

With the XC60 restricted to little more than a weekly three-mile round trip to Tesco during lockdown, it's an ideal opportunity to crunch the figures against some of the mid-size Volvo's main competitors.

We've chosen three premium – BMW X3 (2019 registrations: 4,271), Land Rover Discovery Sport (6,521) and Volkswagen Tiguan (25,543) – and a former budget brand now mixing it up in the mass market, the Kia Sportage (20,220). Sales-wise, the Volvo XC60 stands toe-to-toe with the Discovery Sport, at 6,711, up 21.5% on 2018.

We'll compare fuel efficiency, residual value (RV) and running costs (the latter two over four years/80,000 miles) – go to the reviews section on fleetnews.co.uk for more figures, including P11D and CO₂. For simplicity, we'll choose the cheapest 2.0-litre diesel model in the range with comparable power output.

While the Kia, Land Rover and Nissan range from 12.4 pence per mile to 12.75ppm on fuel, the Volvo is a competitive 10.79ppm, while the BMW leads the way on 10.59ppm. Note, though, that the rival models are all-wheel drive; the XC60 is front-wheel drive.

For RVs, the XC60 depreciates at a rate of 34.16ppm, the X3 at 35.09ppm – both a little off the pace. In comparison, the Discovery Sport is 32.8ppm, Tiguan 31.3ppm and Sportage an impressive 28.99ppm.

Combining fuel costs and depreciation with service, maintenance and repair gives the following running cost order: first place goes to the Sportage on 45.89ppm, helped by its low P11D and strong RVs. Next is the Tiguan (49.48ppm), the XC60 (49.83ppm) and Discovery Sport (50.2ppm), while bringing up the rear is the X3 on 51.07ppm.

The actual cost of running a Sportage over four years/80,000 miles is £36,712 – £3,152 lower than the XC60's £39,864.

Of course, while costs are important they aren't everything, and, for me, the two standout models in this list from a driver and family point of view are the Discovery Sport and XC60, with the former just shading it.



Commercial Fleet



The 'forgotten' lockdown 'knights'

Freight needs overlooked as authorities prioritise measures to promote cycling and walking

PLUS: INTERVIEW WITH DAF TRUCKS' MD • VALUE OF IN-CAB CAMERAS • ADVICE FROM THE FTA
FIRST DRIVES: MAXUS DELIVER 9 • TOYOTA PROACE CITY • DAF CF 8X4



Government urged to re-issue guidance for 'forgotten' commercial fleets

As authorities bid to encourage cycling and walking, freight has been 'completely overlooked'

By Gareth Roberts

New guidance allowing local authorities to widen pavements and re-distribute road space fails to consider the needs of delivery and service fleets.

No mention is made of maintaining kerbside access for deliveries, the needs of other road-users or the potential economic impact.

Published by the Government to help councils manage social distancing as the lockdown is lifted and people return to work, calls are now being made for the guidance to be amended and re-issued.

Delivery drivers were lauded at the outbreak of the pandemic, for ensuring shelves were kept stocked and vital services maintained.

Designated as key workers, they were labelled the 'knights of the road'. "We were hailed as being essential and now we've been forgotten in these plans," said Natalie Chapman, head of urban policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA).

"Air quality is important, safety is important, but we need to strike the right balance to make sure it's workable for business."

Both the FTA and the Road Haulage Association (RHA) have written to the Department for Transport (DfT) to request urgent reassurances over the new guidance. The DfT has yet to respond.

Chapman said she was "hopeful" that Government may re-issue guidance to local authorities, with provisions for deliveries.

But, given the daily, high-level contact that the industry is having with ministers at the DfT, she told *Commercial Fleet* she was "very disappointed" for freight to be "completely overlooked".

She also fears that more people will choose to drive, rather than walk and cycle, leading to greater congestion in towns and cities, with precious road space being re-distributed.

In a letter to transport minister Baroness Vere, RHA chief executive, Richard Burnett, questioned how

much road space was being lost to vans and trucks.

"In London, the place with by far the highest cycling levels of UK cities with more than 200,000 people, just 2.5% of trips are made by bicycle," he said.

"We appear to be taking space away from the 97.5% of other road users to favour a small minority."

He insisted that the RHA was not anti-cycling, but it simply believed the road network needs to work for "all road users".

The RHA is particularly concerned about the removal of parking. Burnett says access to businesses in urban areas is "already difficult" in many places.

The current situation has made problems worse as the need to socially distance, when making deliveries and collections, can extend waiting times.

Burnett said: "We are already seeing enforcement of petty overstay times when making deliveries. Reducing parking for goods vehicles further – the vehicles that are essen-

tial for the businesses of people of our cities – is extremely unhelpful."

Chapman worries that councils "don't get freight". She explained: "That's not necessarily their fault, but that's where Government needs to step in and provide that clarity."

As the country moves into the next phase of lifting the lockdown, an increasing number of retail outlets will begin opening their doors.

"They're going to need deliveries otherwise they'll have nothing to sell," continued Chapman. "We need that guidance as soon as possible, because these schemes are coming forward now."

TEMPORARY MEASURES

Cities across England have already started adapting road layouts to provide more space for cycling and walking as coronavirus restrictions begin to be lifted.

Some streets are becoming bike- and bus-only, while side streets could be closed to through traffic, to create low-traffic neighbourhoods and reduce rat-running.



Manchester has launched a £5 million Safe Streets Save Lives campaign, with local authorities looking to prioritise a range of temporary, pop-up measures such as pavement widening, one-way streets, removing through traffic on certain roads and adding extra cycle lanes.

In the capital, Transport for London (TfL) has launched the 'London Streetspace' programme, which aims to "rapidly transform" roads to accommodate a possible 10-fold increase in cycling and five-fold increase in walking.

Euston Road is one of the first main thoroughfares to have temporary cycle lanes installed and Park Lane could follow suit.

Meanwhile, streets between London Bridge and Shoreditch, Euston and Waterloo, and Old Street and Holborn, could be reserved for buses, pedestrians and cyclists.

All these measures can be introduced temporarily, either in isolation or as a combined package. Some interventions, including new

lightly segregated cycle lanes, will not require Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs); others will.

They are classed as 'permanent', 'experimental' and 'temporary', with councils opting for temporary TROs to introduce the majority of measures.

'LIMITED' CONSULTATION

Temporary TROs can be in place for up to 18 months. There is a seven-day notice period prior to making the TRO and a 14-day notification requirement after it is made, plus publicity requirements.

Local authorities say that – following consultation with communities – they would like to make many of the schemes permanent.

However, in the interim, the use of temporary TROs is only giving businesses and fleet operators seven days to respond. Chapman says, with the volume of traffic orders being issued, the industry simply doesn't have the 'bandwidth' to look at all of them in detail.

She added: "It would save a lot of

time and hassle if they were better thought out from the outset with good quality guidance, which would enable them to develop much better schemes."

TfL acknowledged that, due to the speed at which these temporary changes need to be introduced, it would not be able to formally consult before changes are made.

However, a spokesperson told *Commercial Fleet*, TfL was working with local businesses and boroughs to "ensure the temporary arrangements accommodate their requirements".

It will also review all changes regularly to ensure they are operating as intended.

The spokesperson said: "Freight is the lifeblood of London's economy and TfL is committed to working together with the industry to tackle some of its biggest challenges, including road danger and air quality.

"As part of these plans we are still protecting key freight corridors to maintain essential deliveries and

servicing, and all projects will go through a robust approval process.

"This includes making sure that there are alternative routes available and seeking to ensure that provision for loading continues, though there may be changes to when servicing can take place."

The spokesperson added that TfL continues to have regular discussions with freight companies and industry trade bodies around the impact and operation of these and other changes related to the coronavirus pandemic.

She added: "We work with industry partners in bodies including FORS, LoCity and the Central London Freight Quality Partnership to develop solutions that work and will be re-launching the TfL Freight Forum this summer."

RESTRICTED ACCESS

Nevertheless, both the FTA and RHA say local businesses must be consulted on all measures, even though their shopfronts may be closed, so they can make sure proposals meet their needs when they re-open.

Kerbside access must also be maintained for deliveries and servicing, while roads should only be closed where the impact is minimal to traffic flows, they say.

Furthermore, they are calling for enforcement against delivery vehicles to be proportionate, while any temporary reallocation of road space should be flexed to reflect changes in demand and to ensure access for logistics.

They also want restrictions on delivery hours to be reviewed.

Restrictions, previously in place on night-time deliveries to stores, were relaxed on March 9 to enable shops to replenish shelves with groceries, hygiene products and other essentials.

As supply chains unravelled, the Government also relaxed competition laws to allow supermarkets to share staff, stock and delivery vans in local areas, to help keep stores open and deliveries on track.

ParcelHero's head of consumer research, David Jinks, said: "When TfL's 'Quiet Deliveries' scheme was pioneered for the London Olympics the trial was highly successful, with virtually no complaints from residents about noise or inconvenience.

"Sadly, as soon as the Games ended, businesses reverted to their former practices and much of the advances made, in terms of both night restocking and retailer collaboration, were lost.

"This time, as the lockdown lifts, we must not let that happen again."

Daf Trucks makes plans for post-Covid-19 future

Market leader expects an impact on parent company's results. But stresses it has strength to ride out storm. *Stephen Briers* reports

Approachable and supportive: two attributes upon which Daf Trucks has built its 25-year market leadership in the UK. Both also came to the fore in the early weeks of the coronavirus crisis.

Laurence Drake, promoted from UK sales director to managing director eight months ago, has based his strategy on being the "business partner of choice". But he is facing unparalleled challenges compared with those encountered by his predecessors.

Trucks stopped rolling off the production line at the end of March as Daf's Leyland plant in Lancashire went into shutdown for the best part of a month, before being phased back in. Meanwhile, the machinery at its parts suppliers also fell silent.

Daf was forced to make rapid adjustments to ensure it was able to continue supporting dealers and customers, particularly for aftersales and recovery services.

The number of mechanics at the independent dealer network of 134 sites fell by 14% in April, although demand for service jobs fell by 25%. Preserving that ratio is crucial to ensure capacity.

As for parts supply, Daf overstocked towards the end of 2019 due to all the Brexit uncertainty, so it was able to maintain a strong first-time pick rate (95% in recent weeks against a usual average of 99%).

"Being the business partner of choice is key for me and this crisis could help that process because people are coming to us to see how we can work with them," Drake says.

CORONAVIRUS MEASURES

Daf introduced a range of measures to support customers at the outset of the nationwide lockdown, offering them the opportunity to freeze R&M contracts for two months or take a payment holiday for two months. To date, 1,678 R&M contracts have been frozen, but 307 have since requested reactivation because the vehicles are now required again for work.

"We will be pragmatic with this; it's two months but it may be longer," Drake said. "The payment holiday would give them two months' credit back, but that's not as popular. And, of course, it depends on the business – supermarkets, for example, are super busy and want more vehicles."

Daf's funding arm Paccar Finance is also receptive to individual discussion on payment contracts, with various options available dependent on the type and length of finance.

Support was further extended to drivers, as Daf began offering them a free hot drink at four

ELECTRIC DAFS DUE IN 2020

Daf expects to have its first electric truck on sale in the UK next year as it begins building to the European target of electric accounting for 2% of sales by 2025.

A CF electric tractor, being trialled in Eindhoven, had been planned for initial testing in the UK later this year, but that is likely to slip due to the coronavirus crisis. Nevertheless, Daf is in talks with prospective customers and is confident some will make the investment in 2021.

It also expects to put an electric LF into early customer trials in Q1.

"At the moment, it's going to cost more money," says Laurence Drake. "But if the battery price comes down, it becomes more viable. Subsidies can help – that's what we would look for to support the business case."


The Eindhoven trials have now reached 150,000km (93,000 miles) with several customers and have been positively rated for reliability.

Customer Eveline Manders, co-director of Tinie Manders Transport, explains the different mindset needed: "You have to make sure that the route fits the truck – and not the other way around.

Moreover, it is important that you can charge the batteries during loading and unloading. If you take these two matters into account, the electric truck can be a great alternative for urban distribution."

The CF has range of 100km (62 miles) but some operators are travelling 250km (155 miles) a day as it can be fully charged in just over 30 minutes.

Drake believes the immediate outlook is for the lighter LF to be pure electric and mid-weight trucks to be hybrid, but heavy haulage will still be diesel, although hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) is an option to reduce CO₂ emissions.



COMPANY: Daf Trucks
HEAD OFFICE: Haddenham, Bucks
UK MANUFACTURING PLANT: Leyland, Lancs
UK MD: Laurence Drake
TIME IN ROLE: eight months
ANNUAL SALES (2019): 14,825 (up 26.3%)
MARKET SHARE (2019): 30.5% (2018: 27.2%)

independent truck stops across the country, regardless of the make of their truck.

Its immediate priority is to ensure it is ready to begin fulfilling orders post lockdown, working with its network of 52 bodybuilders to push vehicles through the chain.

"Business isn't going to be normal for a while. There will be social distancing for some time and the economy won't bounce-back (immediately), so we will have to work with customers on their order boards before we turn on vehicle replacements," said Drake.

Coronavirus will undoubtedly have a significant impact on parent company Paccar's results for 2020 due to its lower production schedules and changing customer demand, although it stresses it has the financial strength to ride out the storm.

Q1 REVENUES

First quarter revenues were \$5.16 billion (£4.2bn), compared with \$6.49bn (£5.3bn) in 2019. Net income fell from \$629.0 million (£513m) to \$359.4m (£293m). However, manufacturing cash and marketable securities were \$4.3bn (£3.5bn), and it also has access to credit worth \$3bn (£2.4bn).

"Paccar gives us huge financial strength and investment in product research and development," says Drake. "When we add that to our Daf strength of customer relationships and our independent dealer network, it's a powerful proposition."

Deep pockets will help Daf to quickly return to full speed, but also mean it barely skipped a beat during the gravest moments of the lockdown.

So, what of the future? Drake's priority post Covid-19 is to continue building Daf's pragmatism for services and customer support which has taken it to one-in-three trucks on UK roads.

"We've been market leader for 25 years, but our focus is always on how we improve," he says. "We have to help customers with transport solutions."

He adds: "It's about how future customers interact with manufacturers and dealers, and about how we move into alternative fuels and drive assistance systems. We have to have services ready for when the future product is here."

Technology has been a mainstay of recent models, with electronic inspection and service management system Daf Check offered free with every truck and approved under the DVSA Earned Recognition scheme.

Meanwhile, the Daf Connect fleet management and logistics platform gives operators real-time insight into the performance of their drivers, vehicles and logistics processes, including preventative maintenance data and fault codes. Just over half of fleet customers take the system (others may have incumbent software).

The latest development will offer open platform access to the system to pull in data from non-Daf vehicles as well as enabling operators using third party systems to integrate their Daf data, increasing its fleet appeal.

Customer interaction is always high on Daf's agenda, with the dealer network playing a fundamental role. It is "a big win" in ensuring the best decisions are made for customers, with many relationships dating back decades.

However, there are challenges ahead about its shape and role, as vehicles become more advanced and customer needs change.

“BEING THE BUSINESS PARTNER OF CHOICE IS KEY FOR ME AND THIS CRISIS COULD HELP THAT PROCESS”

LAURENCE DRAKE, DAF TRUCKS

Questions need to be answered about the look of a dealership in five years' time such as the size of the workshop, number of bays and workforce.

"We need a systems service advisor that can understand all the preventative maintenance codes and can act on the data," says Drake. "At the moment, the dealer would see that as a cost, not a benefit."

He adds: "We also need an infrastructure that can handle a one-man-band and a national fleet; one which can identify electric vehicles with not enough charge and help them to complete their journey. This is where we need to step in and work with the dealers."

It's a major priority for the company, as the needs of customers continue to evolve.

"Customer expectations start with the product, but that's cyclical between the main manufacturers dependent on who's launching (at any particular time)," Drake says. "But it's the service element that keeps us on top. So that's my focus."

He is constantly examining current performance, asking is it good enough.

"With DafAid, we carry out roadside repairs in 44 minutes (on average). Is that good enough? How can we improve the proportion of trucks that are repaired at the roadside?" he says. "For parts supply, if you order by 6pm it's there at 8am – that's better than Amazon!"

SAME-DAY ASSESSMENT

Speed of service and improving communications are key considerations. Drake is keen for dealers to get vehicles in for maintenance assessment the same day that the customer phones up.

"We are looking at service advisors asking the right questions, getting the vehicle in and telling them if they can fix it now or it's a two-day job to be booked in," he says.

"That's one element. The other is when the vehicle is in, giving them updates on the repair. The background work (doing the service or repair) is the same; it's the front end that has changed."


He frequently glances at developments in car workshops to consider whether they are transferable to trucks. Service videos are the latest to catch his attention.

"We have looked at this and some customers would like it. We have linked it with Daf Check so we can do it. Now it's a question of whether it's worthwhile. I think we will use it for certain things, such as getting approval for repairs."

He adds: "This is all part of the solution. The next five-to-10 years will be challenging; we have to build on our current services and constantly develop new ones."

CAMERAS PUT BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS

They can help fleets to trip up the crash-for-cash scammers and offer drivers protection from being falsely accused of driving dangerously. And those are just a couple of the benefits. *John Lewis* reports



Having cameras installed may help to establish why this truck left the road

Often brightly sign-written with the operator's name highlighted in big bold letters, commercial vehicles are tempting targets for crash-for-cash scams.

A dishonest motorist suddenly brakes in front of a van or truck, deliberately causes an accident, claims it was the other driver's fault and demands compensation for damage to his car and alleged injuries. The car's other occupants demand compensation, too.

If there are no other witnesses and no CCTV footage – scammers often stage accidents in CCTV blind spots and at places such as traffic lights where potential witnesses may be reluctant to stop – the fleet concerned is worryingly vulnerable to a fraudulent insurance claim.

If the van or truck is fitted with a forward-facing camera which has recorded footage of what has happened, however, then the fleet has evidence it can use in its defence. It can be used to defend the driver as well, says Richard Lane, commercial director at VisionTrack.

"I can think of at least once incident involving a fatality where the police went from treating the driver as a criminal to treating him with the utmost compassion having seen the camera evidence," he observes.

VisionTrack supplies connected vehicle cameras and video telematics, as does Lytx.

"Cameras can be viewed as a positive way of protecting a fleet's drivers," says Lytx vice president, Europe, Damian Penney.

Steve Redford, head of product, fleet performance, at telematics specialist Microlise, adds: "They know they can't be blamed for something that wasn't their fault."

Thankfully, crash-for-cash scams and fatalities are rare occurrences for the majority of operators. More likely are relatively minor bumps and bangs that may be partly the fault of the fleet driver, and partly the fault of another road user.

"In a 50/50 incident what a camera does is allow you to see exactly what has happened and get control of the situation quickly," says Penney. "You can obtain first notification of any loss and you may be able to get rid of some claims."

The cameras fitted to vehicles by companies such as VisionTrack begin recording the minute the driver switches on the ignition. They may continue recording for a little while after the engine has been switched off.

If the driver brakes heavily or swerves violently then this can trigger the instant uploading of a video clip to the cloud that covers the event itself plus the 10 seconds before and after the incident. The location can be pinpointed too.

"A clip can also be uploaded if the driver hits a panic button," says Lane.

The clip can then be analysed by the camera

supplier's fleet support service – assuming that it has one – a risk management company, an insurer or the fleet manager to see how serious the event is and what action may have to be taken.

"We can hold footage uploaded to the cloud for a year," says Redford.

Cameras such as VisionTrack's VT1000 can record anywhere from 12-to-372 hours of footage dependent on the resolution that is required. If they are linked to an on-board MDVR (mobile digital video recorder) with a hard drive then it can be stored for up to six months.

Having such records can be invaluable if somebody rings on a Friday and claims that one of your vehicles dented his parked car the previous Tuesday. The footage can disprove the claim or possibly show the caller is telling the truth.

MDVRs can support up to 24 channels VisionTrack points out. This means they can cope with several cameras, including those covering the vehicle's sides, rear and cargo area as well as the forward-facing one.

Impacts from the rear account for as many as one-third of all collisions the company says, which means that having a camera mounted on the rear of a van or truck can make sound sense.

Last year saw tool and plant hire specialist Speedy Asset Services opt to have VisionTrack's VT2000 forward-facing camera installed in a further 50 of its recently-acquired vans. In the



past, it had relied on a camera from another supplier which required footage to be manually downloaded.

"It often took up to three weeks to receive footage from drivers and we suffered regular equipment failure," recalls Speedy's road risk manager, Gareth Jones. "The system we have now provides real-time alerts in the event of a collision and rapid access to footage.

"It means we can immediately check on the welfare of the driver and prove liability in less than 30 minutes," he adds.

Speedy raced off with Commercial Fleet's Safety Initiative of the Year award in 2019.

If somebody is so badly hurt by a collision with a fleet vehicle that they suffer life-changing injuries then the award made to them by a court is likely to be substantial. Camera footage can be essential in helping to determine exactly what happened and the quality is good enough to withstand legal scrutiny, says Penney.

"Judges know about video evidence and will be looking for it," he says.

Redford says: "What it shows may prevent a vehicle from being impounded by the authorities. If it is impounded, then it may be returned more quickly than it might otherwise have been."

Penney adds: "Some operators say 'I don't want video from on-board cameras because it will incriminate us'. It may, of course, do the opposite;



**DRIVERS DON'T
MIND THE CAMERA
BEING THERE, BUT
THEY WANT TO KNOW
WHAT HAPPENS TO
THE FOOTAGE**

DAMIAN PENNEY, LYTX

unless the fleet concerned is badly run.

Some fleets have had inward- as well as forward-facing cameras fitted which keep an eye on the driver. While some drivers may be reluctant to be monitored in this way, and trade union representatives may raise concerns, inward-facing camera can provide whoever is at the wheel with valuable cameras protection, Penney contends.

If there is a collision, then there may be allega-

tions that the driver concerned was using a hand-held mobile, eating a sandwich or lighting a cigarette. The camera may show instead that he had both hands on the wheel and was paying full attention.

"If there is a shred of doubt then the footage from the inward-facing camera has to be reviewed and can potentially exonerate the driver from any blame," he says.

Drivers aren't always keen to have facing cameras, however. "I've heard stories of drivers taking marker pens to the camera's lens or attempting to point it away from them," says Redford. "In the main, however, they feel it protects them."

Penney says: "I've stood in front of union reps and drivers at 4am before the drivers go on shift and pointed out its advantages. The drivers often take the view that they don't mind the camera being there, but they want to know what is going to happen to the footage."

One use to which it can be put is as a training tool, helping drivers understand and correct poor practices.

"Always remember that what companies are looking for is the ability to stop collisions happening in the first place," Penney adds.

"A telematics system will show you if a driver was speeding or braking harshly," he says. "What it won't reveal is that the driver who was doing 40mph in a 50mph limit and apparently behaving ➡



responsibly was in fact smoking, eating a sandwich, looking at his phone and controlling the vehicle with the steering wheel between his knees. An inward-facing camera will.”

Data from cameras and the telematics trace combined can be used to build up an overall picture of what happened in the run-up to a collision. Ideally, cameras should be triggered by the events an on-board telematics system records rather than their own built-in G-sensor, says Ian Hoskins, senior video and telematics consultant at telematics specialist Ctrack.

That is because the telematics black box is likely to be more accurate when it comes to reacting to significant incidents, he contends.

As managing partner of UKFleetInsurance.com, Barry James has found that having connected dashcams and telematics installed can halve the frequency of on-highway incidents and reduce insurance premiums by 30% in less than a year. That means the operator can enjoy a return on investment in no more than 12 months in terms of insurance savings, says James.

His firm works closely with camera specialist SmartWitness.

“When an incident does occur there is hi-res

footage and telematics data available which brings the number of insurance disputes down to less than 1%,” James says. “Clearly there may still be insurance cost implications when the SmartWitness footage determines who is at fault, but there are no longer any lengthy legal disputes which ramp up the costs.”

Ian McCarron, a director of fleet insurance brokers McCarron Coates, adds: “Cameras give you extra sets of eyes. The evidence they provide means that claims can be managed and settled more quickly so costs are kept to a minimum.

“They give you details such as the weather conditions and the road layout. You’re not relying solely on a driver’s sketch on a claim form.”

The value of cameras is not being ignored by vehicle manufacturers. MAN, for example, offers them as an add-on to its Fit to Go telematics package developed in conjunction with Microlise.

“Some operators simply want a forward-facing camera, others want cameras that will cover other areas of the truck too, including the nearside and offside,” says Ajaz Khan, MAN uptime principal support centre manager, aftersales UK, and a telematics specialist.

A way of convincing wary drivers that cameras

can be of benefit could be for senior fleet executives to have them installed in their cars, suggests Penney. “It’s all about leadership,” he says.

Awareness of the presence of cameras prompts drivers to be more careful at the wheel.

Lane says: “You’re less likely to pick up your hand-held mobile when you’re driving if you think your manager may see what you’re up to and speak to you about it.

“Working through an insurance company, we installed 10,000 cameras in vehicles operated by fleets of various sizes. They subsequently saw their accident frequency rate fall by an average 24%.”

Another tool and plant hire company, Brandon Hire Station, saw a 46% reduction in collisions during the 12 months after it opted for a camera and analysis solution from Lytx. The incidence of drivers reacting late to challenges they faced on the highway fell by 31% while distracted driving fell by 25%.

Well in excess of 70% of drivers were found to be driving less close to the vehicle in front than they did previously.

Brandon fleet manager Stuart Conway says: “A major factor in our decision was that Lytx reviews



LEFT: A camera and analysis solution from Lytx helped one company to almost halve its collisions

RIGHT: MAN has collaborated with Microlise to offer a telematics package



the 12-second clips captured and uploaded by the cameras and only sends us what we need to see. Some other systems send you 15 hours of footage a day and we simply don't have the capacity to go through all of that."

What do Brandon's drivers make of it? "They've responded brilliantly," he replies.

"They've overwhelmingly seen it as an investment in their safety and future and in the safety of other road users," Conway adds. "I'd like to think that the very strong results we've already achieved are only the beginning."

Brandon Hire's proactive approach to safety was recognised when the company was awarded Commercial Fleet's Most Improved Fleet award in 2019. Conway, himself, was highly commended in the Fleet Manager of the Year section.

A forward- and inward-facing camera system which enables video clips to be uploaded to the cloud and monitored remotely can cost from £20 to £35 per vehicle per month when leased under a contract that may run for from three-to-five years. The monthly charge includes the necessary hardware and installation.

If you want to buy the cameras prices can vary significantly.

Microlise, for example, can supply you with forward- and inward-facing cameras for £630 plus the cost of installation. They take around three-to-four hours to fit, says Redford.

A monthly charge of £2 per camera ensures that footage is uploaded when required, but does not include the cost of having it reviewed.

Will fitting cameras lead to a cut in insurance premiums? Depends on which insurer you talk to, says Penney.

"Some will say that the proof is in the pudding, and they'll look at your claims rate after a year before making any decision," he says. "Others will say they know cameras work, so they will reduce premiums in advance if they are installed."

Lane adds: "Some may be willing to fund or part-fund the installation of cameras."

The level of premium reduction that can be achieved as a consequence varies hugely, says Lane. Much depends on the fleet's risk profile to begin with.

"If the fleet has a good accident record then it may not fall at all," he says.

Penney says that at the other end of the spectrum, fleets with a really poor claims record and under pressure from their insurers may have little choice but to install cameras in the hope that it will lead to a claims reduction.

Many operators sit somewhere in the middle. Lane says: "Their premiums could potentially halve."

Fleets with a substantial excess or that are self-insured to a large extent will, of course, benefit anyway if the arrival of cameras leads to a significant reduction in accident frequency, and to damage that they have to pay to get put right.

Forward- and inward-facing cameras may be only part of the solution so far for vans and trucks.

Penney adds: "What you really need is a 360-degree view."



**CAMERAS
INTEGRATED WITH A
TELEMATICS SYSTEM
CAN DELIVER A
20%-TO-50% FALL IN
CLAIMS COSTS**

IAN HOSKINS, CTRACK

That involves having nearside and offside cameras installed along with a rear-mounted one.

The extra hardware plus the increased monthly charge bumps up the cost. The expenditure may be worth it, however, if your drivers have to tackle a lot of urban work, with cyclists regularly sneaking up nearside when they are about to turn left.

Some fleets may have no choice.

Trucks grossing at more than 12 tonnes that fail to meet Transport for London's Safe System minimum one-star rating from 26 October onwards will have to be equipped with a nearside camera, points out the Freight Transport Association. It will have to be accompanied by a sensor system that alerts the driver to the presence of a nearside vulnerable road user.

Other requirements include an audible warning device that tells vulnerable road users that the truck is going to swing left plus side under-run protection fitted to both sides of the vehicle unless this is impractical.

"Cameras integrated with a telematics system can deliver a 20%-to-50% fall in claims costs," says Ctrack's Hoskins. "Maintenance costs could fall by 10%, and mpg improve by around 1%."

Cameras should prompt even the most wayward employee to drive more smoothly. That means less wear and tear on vehicles, less fuel used and reduced CO₂ emissions.

**The VT2000 from
VisionTrack**



FTA ADVICE

By Ray Marshall, senior transport advisor, FTA

Q When a road changes speed limits from, say, 60mph to 40mph, is there a grace period after the 40mph sign to decelerate to that speed? And vice versa; if you are driving on a 40mph road heading towards a 60mph, is there any grace period to start accelerating before you pass the 60mph sign?

A There is no grace period for accelerating or decelerating up to or past a speed limit sign. The vehicle must not be travelling faster than the posted speed limit the moment that it passes the sign and must not exceed the posted speed limit when approaching the increased speed limit sign.



Q Does a driver have to take holidays? Also, do we legally have to show holidays in our working time calculations for drivers who do not want to take any holiday? The driver in question works full-time under EU drivers' hours rules, which we conform with. The problem we have is that the driver in question never wants to take holiday and would rather be at work.

A Everyone needs a holiday even if only to recharge the batteries. Under the Road Transport (Working Time) Regulations 2005, mobile workers are required to have a minimum of 20 days' statutory

holiday per year. This is a legal requirement. Regarding Working Time, the 20 days must be recorded as eight hours per day or 48 hours per week. The days can be spread out throughout the year but there must be at least 20 days of holiday recorded for your drivers. Any days above the 20 statutory days can be recorded as zero regarding working time calculations. The main directive only required four weeks of paid holiday, but the UK Government has extended this.

Employers can stipulate when leave is taken and there is no legal requirement to take time off on bank holidays.



Protect home workers – out of sight cannot mean out of mind

As a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, many employees are now working from home. As an employer, you have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers.

When someone is working from home, permanently or temporarily, as an employer you should consider:

■ How will you keep in touch?

■ What work activity will they be doing (and for how long)?

■ Can it be done safely?

■ Do you need to put measures in place to protect them?

There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. Keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and keep in regular

contact to make sure they are healthy and safe. If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned, this can affect stress levels and mental health.

For those working at home on a long-term basis, the risks associated with using Display Screen Equipment (DSE) must be controlled. This includes doing home workstation assessments.

However, there is no increased risk from DSE work for those working at home temporarily. Employers do not need to do home workstation assessments.

Being away from managers and colleagues could make it difficult to get proper support. It is important to have an emergency point of contact and to share this so people know how to get help if they need it.



Driver welfare facilities becoming more vital than ever

In the past few weeks, the growing Covid-19 pandemic has presented the logistics sector with its biggest challenge for a generation, and FTA has been supporting its members as they deal with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak on their operations and supply chains since the beginning of February.

This has highlighted to us a familiar topic of driver welfare facilities for visiting drivers.

The Traffic Commissioners are aware of a number of incidents in which drivers have been refused access to handwashing and toilet facilities when making deliveries. Even more shockingly, on occasion, this has involved operators refusing access to other operators.

Government guidance is clear on the measures that everyone should be taking during the Covid-19 outbreak. In order to adhere to this, and protect themselves and others, drivers must be fully supported in carrying out their duties safely.

The advice issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) says it is illegal to refuse drivers access to sanitary facilities when they are delivering to your premises. It also acknowledges that failure to allow use of welfare provisions could increase the risk of the Covid-19 virus spreading.

The Traffic Commissioners urge everyone to unite during the outbreak and say it is vital the whole country pulls together in these challenging times

Truck drivers regularly report serious failings in facilities provided by employers and public facilities, such as no running water, no lockable cubicles and no soap or toilet roll. In some cases, access to toilets is denied all together. The lack of facilities can also potentially affect drivers' and other road users' safety as research has shown that lack of toilets discourages drinking, meaning drivers can become dehydrated and more likely to make mistakes.

The HSE has re-examined the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992; in particular, regulations 20 and 21, which state that suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities shall be provided at readily accessible places.

The HSE guide to workplace transport safety already states, at paragraph 127, that when deliveries and collections are made, loading and unloading areas should have easy and safe access to toilet, washing and refreshment facilities.

It now finally seems that things are beginning to move in favour of drivers as the HSE said that it has reviewed its approach and its guidance will now state that drivers must have access to welfare facilities in the premises they visit as part of their work.

As well as the employment law implications, companies may also be asked by operators if they will provide toilet facilities for drivers and this may in due course become a contractual provision.

MAXUS DELIVER 9

Latest addition is loaded with safety equipment in pursuit of a five-star NCAP rating

By Tim Campbell

The Deliver 9 is set to be Maxus's second van launch for 2020 after the 'E Deliver 3' electric van (see last month's issue). It is a successor to the ageing V80. Offering more body styles than any of its predecessors that wore the LDV badge, the Deliver 9 is available in front- or rear-wheel drive, three lengths and the choice of diesel or electric.

It was rumoured that China-based parent company SAIC would be launching the successor to the V80 early in 2018 but it finally broke cover in April 2019 at Auto Shanghai. Initially called the V90, SAIC changed the name to 'Deliver 9' due to a clash with Volvo's vehicle designations.

The company, which changed its name from LDV to Maxus last month, is confident that it will make inroads in new markets around the world.

"We are a strong competitor with the Sprinter," remarked Maxus (LDV) director of overseas

department, Yang Jun Ling. "We want to position with Sprinter, but, at the same time we're going to aim at a very attractive and competitive price. This has been developed primarily for Europe."

The Deliver 9 employs cutting-edge design inside and out with its large, octagonal and chrome-laden grille and smaller and more defined LED lights. The similarly stylish panoramic and curved dashboard employs a mix of hard and soft-touch plastics.

The high seating position provides great all-round vision and the seats are comfortable. Our only criticism is the lack of usable storage spaces and the slightly claustrophobic cabin environment.

To meet European consumer demands, the Maxus Deliver 9 has been furnished with all the latest tech. Comfort and convenience features include keyless entry and ignition, adaptive cruise control, dual-zone climate control and a nine-inch touchscreen display with Apple Carplay and Android Auto.

Maxus is gunning for a five-star NCAP rating so Deliver 9's safety features comprise forward collision warning with autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning and blind spot monitoring.

Of particular interest to fleets is the new 'Smart Spider 3.0' connectivity system. It will provide a range of fleet management services including servicing scheduling, remote locking/unlocking from a smartphone and remote starting to pre-heat the cab on cold mornings.

Propulsion comes in the form of SAIC's new 2.0-litre engine producing 163PS and 375Nm for European customers, with torque peaking as low as 1,500rpm.

Interestingly, a lot of work has gone into improving

“IF OUR TEST DRIVE IS ANYTHING TO GO BY, THIS CHINESE WILDCARD SHOULD HAVE THE TOP-SEEDED EUROPEAN RIVALS QUAKING IN THEIR BOOTS”

the NVH (noise, vibration and harshness) with rubber-moulded and foam covers surrounding the engine, and it now produces just 47 decibels at idle which is on-par with the petrol version.

The engine is hooked to a new six-speed manual transmission which is still slightly clunky compared with European standards, but once it's in, provides almost seamless changes. There will eventually be the choice of an automatic and automated manual.

As mentioned, Maxus will offer either a front- or rear-wheel drive and an electric version called the 'Maxus E Deliver 9', although little more is known.

If our initial – and very brief – test drive is anything to go by, this Chinese wildcard should have the top-seeded European rivals quaking in their boots.

The steering is accurate, it corners well with minimal body roll, there is little road noise and, thanks to that low-end torque, it's very responsive.

MODEL TESTED MAXUS DELIVER 9

SPECIFICATIONS	
OTR price	£20,000 (est)
Power/torque	163PS/375Nm
Payload	up to 1,600kg
Gross vehicle weight	3.0-4.5t
Load volume	TBA
Fuel cost	n/a
SMR	n/a
Running cost	n/a
Fuel economy	TBA



Our only slight grumble is the notchy gear changes.

Most LDVs of the past have been offered in one or two lengths and two heights but the Deliver 9 is more in-line with European manufacturers with a far more comprehensive three body lengths and three roof heights configuration.

Weights have yet to be announced but the gross vehicle weights are expected to range between 3.0 and 4.5 tonnes.

Thanks to the low chassis weight, Maxus says the payloads will be very competitive and up to around 1.6 tonnes on the 3.5t van.

The Deliver 9 is expected to go on sale in the UK around September 2020 and is expected to be competitively priced from around £20,000 plus VAT for the basic variant – a modest increase on the V80, but still undercutting most of the competitors. It will be backed by Maxus's excellent five-year, 125,000-mile warranty.



Cab feels slightly claustrophobic



TOYOTA PROACE CITY

Proace should appeal to fleets seeking a high standard of equipment

By John Lewis

Toyota is extending its light commercial line-up with the launch of the compact Proace City. Despite its name, it is not a smaller version of the Ford-Transit-Custom-rivalling Proace. Instead, it is a rebadged version of Peugeot's Partner, Citroën's Berlingo and Vauxhall's Combo, all three of which are produced by PSA.

Power comes from a 1.5-litre diesel at either 75PS or 103PS. An electric model looks set to arrive in 2022.

Customers can choose either a short- or a long-wheelbase City with load cubes of 3.3cu.m or 3.9cu.m respectively. The short-wheelbase variant can handle a 650kg payload rising to 1,000kg if you opt for the 103PS engine, while its long-wheelbase counterpart (101PS only) is good for 950kg.

Braked towing capacity is 1,500kg in all cases.

Specification levels are either entry-level Active (short-wheelbase only) or more upmarket Icon (short- and long-wheelbase), and Toyota is targeting small- to medium-sized fleets eager for a high standard of equipment.

Active models come with manual air conditioning



and a sliding door on each side of the cargo area. Choosing Icon adds front and rear parking sensors, an electronic parking brake, a reversing camera, a multimedia system with an eight-inch colour touchscreen, and smartphone integration via Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

An optional safety pack for Icons includes lane departure alert and road sign assist.

So what's Proace City like to drive? With 103PS on tap and an empty load area, the short-wheelbase Icon we sampled certainly wasn't short of performance, and a smooth gear change allowed me to make the most of it.

It rode and handled well, but road noise could be a touch intrusive at times and needs to be better-suppressed. Build quality was top-notch - nothing rattled or squeaked.

Seems a pity that the only gearbox available across the range is a five-speed manual. The option of a sixth gear would be welcome especially with the 103PS engine; fleets that choose it may be doing so because they have to tackle a lot of motorway work.

Icon comes with a three-seater cab despite the fact that it is too small to accommodate a trio. The hapless occupant of the centre seat has no legroom whatsoever.

Active versions are two-seaters, which make far more sense.

The three-seat configuration has one advantage; it comes with what Toyota refers to as Smart Cargo. A hatch in the standard-on-all-models bulkhead plus a folding outer passenger seat increases load bed length by 1.3m to make it easier to carry items such as ladders and piping.

Fuel economy? Toyota has yet to publish figures for the model we drove, but the nearest equivalent Peugeot Partner's combined figures are 46.2mpg to 55.6mpg.

All new Toyota light commercials now come with a five-year/100,000-mile warranty plus a five-year roadside assistance package, with a guarantee of service appointments to suit customers within seven days offered at the majority of dealerships. Service intervals are set at two years/25,000 miles.

Toyota states that Proace City will retain over one-third of its value after 36 months/60,000 miles according to figures sourced from Cap HPI and KeeResources.

An attractive, well-equipped package, but canny fleet buyers may wish to look at what Citroën, Peugeot and Vauxhall have to offer before making their decision.

MODEL TESTED PROACE CITY ICON LWB

SPECIFICATIONS	
OTR price	£21,321
Power/torque	103PS/250Nm
Payload	950kg
Gross vehicle weight	2,375kg
Load volume	3.3 cu m
Fuel cost	10.28ppm
SMR	2.79ppm
Running cost	45.34ppm
Fuel efficiency	50mpg (estimate)

DAF CF 8X4

It's a 'traditional standard' for construction work, but that doesn't detract from its capabilities

By Tim Campbell

The construction site and Daf Trucks make a perfect combination. It's no big secret that Daf Trucks has been looking to the rigid market and while the distribution sector takes a large proportion of the sales, construction also figures heavily, especially when we are talking about multi-axes.

Of course, the construction industry has many requirements and various specific 'mission' vehicles such as the cement mixers, tippers and brick carriers, so diversity is the key.

To cater for this, Daf Trucks has a wide range of offerings including three- and four-axle models with various steered axles and bogie suspension alternatives such as tag, lift, trailing and pushers.

Among all these, perhaps one of the most popular models is the 'traditional standard' Daf CF 8x4 FAD for general tipper work, although recently many people point to the increased interest in tridem in this sector.

Daf employs a series of acronyms after the basic axle configuration such as FAT, FAW, FAG, FAS and so on; in the case of the FAD, it's the 8x4.

The 8x4 is available with two engine sizes and six power ratings from 372PS to 537PS. The Paccar

Euro 6 MX-11 is the lead-in engine starting with a power rating of 372PS and 1,900Nm of torque, this is followed by the 414PS with 2,100Nm and finally the top rated power setting for this 10.8-litre engine is 455PS and 2,300Nm of torque.

The most powerful Paccar engine is the MX-13 and, as the name suggests, it's the 12.9-litre version. Power for this engine starts in between the MX-11's power ratings at 434PS with 2,300Nm of torque, and then has a 490PS setting with 2,500Nm of torque, finally the most powerful available on the 8x4 is the well known and highly respected 537PS with 2,600Nm of torque.

Both engines employ variable geometry turbocharging, exhaust gas recirculation and use AdBlue to help adhere to Euro 6 emission standards.

Sitting behind either engine is the TraXon 12-speed automated gearbox, or there's an option of the gearbox in either manual or automatic transmission.

There are four wheelbases on the FAD, starting with the short wheelbase 5.05m, which is measured by Daf from the centreline of the front axle to the mid-point of the rear bogie. There's also a 5.3m, 5.7m and the maximum wheelbase is 6.4m.

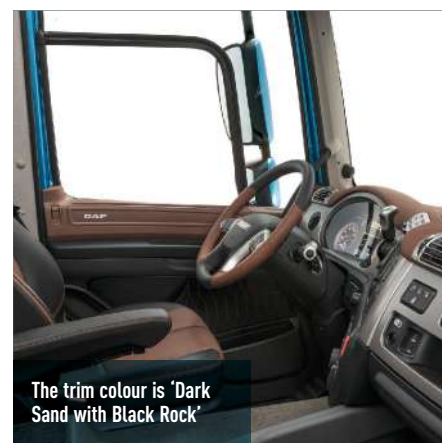
These wheelbases offer a body length on the day cab models from 5.67m to 8.06m, obviously dependent on the type of operation and the loading characteristics of the operation.

If a sleeper cab is required, these figures go from 4.83m to 7.64m dependent on whether you select the standard sleeper cab or go for the top of the range Space cab.

The two front axles sit on steel suspension with shock absorbers and anti-roll bars and are both rated at 7.1 tonnes with the option of higher weights if required.

The rear bogie consists of a relatively new axle set SR1132T, which is a 19-tonne tandem with single reduction, available with steel or air suspension.

The MX engine features an effective engine braking system helping to save money on the service line brakes. The front axles feature ventilated



The trim colour is 'Dark Sand with Black Rock'

disc brakes while the rear tandem bogie is fitted with drum brakes.

Many of the safety systems you may expect on a top of the range tractor unit are not offered as standard such as lane departure warning, stability control or adaptive cruise control, but this is no surprise as an eight-wheeler often spends its time on different types roads (and off road!) more than a top-of-the-range XF.

There are three CF cabs available, a day, sleeper and a top-of-the-range Space cab all 2,300mm in width and offering tinted glass, electric windows, electrically and adjustable heated mirrors and LED daytime running lights.

Inside, the trim colour is a 'Dark Sand with Black Rock', according to Daf and there's an air-suspended driver's seat, automatic temperature control as well as a manual-controlled glass roof hatch.

Daf Trucks has been concentrating on the multi-wheeler sector over the last few years and it has re-designed their product offerings to better match the market. Its CF 8x4 FAD is a great example.

Standard warranty is 12 months complete vehicle, second year driveline and first year breakdown.

MODEL TESTED

DAF CF 8X4 410 FAD

SPECIFICATIONS	
GVW/GCW	32,000kgs
Payload	22,065kgs
Wheelbase	5,050mm
Engine	Paccar MX11 10.8 litre
Power	414PS
Torque	2100Nm @900-1125 rpm
Gearbox	TraXon 12-speed automated
Warranty	12 months complete vehicle

THE LAST WORD

IAN LEONARD

HEAD OF FLEET OPERATIONS, YODEL DELIVERY NETWORK

Leonard doesn't spend a lot of time looking back. He much prefers to look forward. He has no time for dishonesty and says he 'cannot deal with baloney'

My first memory associated with a car is my dad worked in aftersales for what was British Leyland. He ran customers' cars home every now and then as part of an extended road test, and one of his customers had a purple MGB GT V8. It had a profound impact on my life and from this moment on I think I knew that my future was always going to be in and around motor vehicles.

The advice I would give to my 18-year-old self is be bold and take risks. You only get one shot and will not pass through here again.

My hobbies and interests are watching rugby, either professionally or at amateur level with both my sons playing for local clubs and university sides. All music from the '80s and anything to do with motorsport.

A book that I would recommend others read is *Brian O'Driscoll – The Test*. An incredible tale of a magnificent Rugby Union player.

The song I would have on my driving playlist is Fleetwood Mac – *Don't Stop*. I don't spend too much time looking back and much prefer to look forward. Tomorrow is far more interesting than yesterday in my eyes.

My favourite movie quote is "We're gonna need a bigger boat" from *Jaws*. Another example of the pitfalls of not selecting the right vehicle for the right job!

If money was no object I would live in Italy and have at least three of the finest cars available from Ferrari.

If I were made transport minister for the day I would rethink the road sign strategy. Less is more, most of the time.

My pet hate is dishonesty. It can never be that bad, so just tell the truth. I can deal with the truth; I cannot deal with baloney.

Why fleet?

It was a happy accident really. While on probation in the post room at the head office of Alfred McAlpine back in the '80s, a position within their transport and fleet department came up for an apprentice. I joined Yodel in 2015 and the rest is history.

How I got here

Following a spell of almost 30 years working in the fleet departments of construction-related businesses I decided I needed a change. The parcel industry is very different. The past few years at Yodel have been a huge learning curve for me and I am enjoying the challenge.

Latest products, developments and achievements

Fleet management is all about vehicle selection. Pick the right vehicle for the right job and the rest should be easy. My achievements? Redesigning a dropside body and tail lift combination to make things lighter, safer and easier to use, to moving out over-specified tractor units and replacing them with a smaller, lighter unit to deliver greater efficiency while still doing the job.

My company in three words

People. Technology. Adaptability.

Career influence

I'd say a gentleman called Stuart Doughty. He is widely respected among the construction community and somebody who could alter the atmosphere in a room by simply standing in the doorway. He had charisma by the bucket load – along with humility and massive respect from all he encountered.

Advice to fleet newcomers

Fleet is a people business and most people in it are genuine, loyal and, above all, decent. Many have been in it for years and the build-up of knowledge and experience is something to cherish and tap into. By all means blaze your own trail and continue to push and challenge but don't dismiss the wealth and breadth of knowledge out there. It is a great industry to be involved in.



Next issue: Dean Holmes, head of procurement and plant at JN Bentley