

Transport Select Committee

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# Inside this issue



16

Fleet Spotlight:  
Wellocks



24

Insight:  
Workshops

34

First look:  
Renault  
Master ZE



Spotlight:  
Transport Select Committee

20

## 4 | Greener trucks require more Government support

Trials show potential for fleets to cut emissions but extra help is needed

## 6 | Check before death crash 'wholly inadequate'

Haulage boss and mechanic jailed for manslaughter following horror collisions

## 8 | Fleets drive changes to the Dart Charge

Highways England consults fleet body in bid to drive improvements

## 9 | Orange 'peeling' will save more than £450,000

A county council has decided to ditch its policy of painting vehicles in a uniform colour due to funding cuts

## 12 | Rules & regulations/Q&A

Your queries are answered and legislation explained by FTA

## 16 | Fleet spotlight: Wellocks

When your clients are leading chefs in some of the UK's top restaurants turning up late is not an option

## 24 | Insight: Workshops

Several companies successfully manage to run in-house workshops. What tips can they offer to others?

## 33 | New launches: Renault Kangoo ZE, Mercedes-Benz Vito taxi, Volkswagen Caddy, Ford Transit Custom plug-in

## 34-41 | Driven: Iveco Daily 4x4, Citroën Dispatch, Volvo FMX Tipper

# Welcome



The horrific events in Bath, where a badly maintained truck killed four people after the brakes failed, brings into

sharp focus the need for robust risk management and safety procedures.

While the failing in this case was down to the combined negligence of the mechanic and business owner, rather than the driver who was acquitted, every van and truck driver should be reminded of their obligations when it comes to daily vehicle checks.

These are not tick box exercises. Small faults can lead to major failures if they are not picked up early enough. A walk-round should take at least 20 minutes for a van, and longer for a truck. However, we've seen fleets who have implemented daily check apps with time limits of just a few minutes.

That drives the wrong behaviour: a 20- or 30-point vehicle check list simply cannot be carried out in such a short space of time.

Fleets can force drivers to do a proper job by withholding their job lists until the defect report is complete, but a better approach is to engage them in the process so they fully understand the importance of the checks, and do them willingly.

Additional checks can be carried out by site staff and workshops, should your fleet run its own facility. Many companies still do, and we take a closer look at workshop efficiency on page 24.

Stephen Briers,  
editor-in-chief,  
Commercial Fleet

# Drive towards greener trucks needs more incentives from Government, say operators

Trials show potential for commercial fleets to reduce emissions but additional help is required

By Gareth Roberts

**T**hree-quarters (75%) of commercial fleet operators would be persuaded to make the switch to more environmentally friendly fuels and technologies with greater Government support.

The findings, from a *Commercial Fleet* survey, come after the results of the Government's Low Carbon Truck Trial were published and the winners of its Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial were announced.

Both show the potential for the reduction in emissions, but if the Government wants the commercial fleet sector to make the switch to greener, cleaner fuels, the Freight Transport Association (FTA) says it needs significant financial support, similar to that provided to the car sector.

"The majority of Government funding to date has been allocated to cars," said Rachael Dillon, FTA climate change policy manager. "The UK gas truck fleet makes up just 0.2% of the overall truck fleet and there is potential for significant progress to be made in increasing these numbers. However, if the Government is serious about increasing the presence of 'green' trucks on our roads, it must ensure it continues to help provide facilities and incentives for operators to use them."

Businesses are able to apply for grants of up to £20,000 when switching their large trucks to EVs after the Government committed an additional £4m to the plug-in van grant scheme in October 2016, extending the eligibility to including larger electric vehicles (EVs) of more than 3.5 tonnes.

The plug-in van grant has been available for small commercial vehicles of up to 3.5 tonnes since 2012, but take-up has been disappointing.

The industry believes that high costs of vehicle conversions or buying ultra-low emission vehicles plus a lack of public refuelling infrastructure are significant barriers to putting greener trucks on the road.

*"The majority of Government funding to date has been allocated to cars"*

Rachael Dillon, FTA

**£20m**

**funding awarded to deploy low and zero emission vehicles**

Dillon continued: "It is crucial that renewable fuels such as biomethane can be utilised in trucks to bring bigger emission reductions, especially when there are limited options for heavier vehicles to decarbonise. Government must incentivise the production of biomethane for use as a road transport fuel rather than through the heat sector."

The Department for Transport (DfT), the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) and Innovate UK (formerly the Technology Strategy Board) jointly funded the Low Carbon Truck Trial, with £11.3 million to support the procurement of low emission HGV technologies and their supporting infrastructure.

Participants also invested £12.1m of their own cash in the 12 projects which involved 35 companies and more than 370 vehicles, including a majority of dual fuel vehicles, some dedicated gas vehicles and some vehicles running on used cooking oil. Those involved included Argos, DHL, Stobart and John Lewis.

The trial showed that gas commercial vehicles have the potential to deliver significant greenhouse gas (GHG) savings when a non-fossil, renewable or synthetic methane blend is used, according to the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership (LowCVP).

The LowCVP was commissioned in 2016 to conduct a testing programme on the latest methane trucks to identify the performance of Euro 6 vehicles and identify the greenhouse gas impacts, highlighting any areas for further development. Its report was published alongside the DfT's final report on the Low Carbon Truck Trial, which began in 2012 and concluded last year.

LowCVP managing director Andy Eastlake told *Commercial Fleet*:



"This work shows that powering heavy vehicles with natural gas – and, particularly, biomethane – does have the potential to make a significant contribution to cutting emissions from this hard-to-tackle sector of road transport."

The LowCVP report showed that the Euro 6 dedicated gas vehicles tested through the programme exhibited very low levels of methane slip, typically adding less than 0.5% to the overall GHG impacts of those vehicles compared with the CO<sub>2</sub>-only case.

However, the only aftermarket dual-fuel system tested, converting a Euro 6 diesel truck to diesel and natural gas operation, exhibited high levels of methane slip (sufficient to increase GHG emissions by about 20%).

The aftermarket dual fuel (diesel/CNG) conversion of a Euro 5 vehicle also exhibited high levels of methane slip (sufficient to increase GHG emissions by up to 30%).

In addition, the LowCVP report concluded that Euro 6-dedicated gas vehicles emit lower levels of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions than the already low levels exhibited by their diesel counterparts. The same is true if only NO<sub>2</sub> emissions are considered. Emissions of carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons however, were typically higher.

In an effort to further demonstrate new technologies and to encourage the widespread introduction of low and zero emission vehicles to UK fleets, Government cash has been earmarked to 20 firms which set out plans for innovative ways to deploy low and zero emission vehicles.

They will each receive a share of £20m from OLEV and Innovate UK after being named as participants in the Government's Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial.

Innovate UK manufacturing and materials director, Simon Edmonds, believes they will spearhead the uptake of the next generation of low emission freight and fleet vehicles.

He said: "It builds on the results of previous low carbon projects with OLEV and the data collected from this new trial will be invaluable to future development and commercialisation of these vital technologies."

There were more than 40 applications for the scheme – and the winners include a scheme from Teva Motors to increase battery range for electric vehicles.

A partnership led by Ultralow Emission Mileage Company from Liverpool will receive £1.31m to carry out trials using hydrogen dual-fuel technology, while UPS will get £1.33m to invest in smart charging of its electric vans in central London.

20

firms have been selected to take part in the Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial

75%

of fleets say more Government support would help them make the switch to greener fuels and technologies

Air Liquide Group receives the largest amount of funding – £2.57m – for its project trialling biogas in 86 lorries ranging from 26 tonnes to 44 tonnes. In addition, five refrigeration units will use a prototype liquid nitrogen system.

Meanwhile, Arcola Energy will receive £360,000 towards the development of a zero-emission drivetrain, which will be incorporated into a 3.5-tonne van. The 1,000kg payload vehicle will have an approximately 200-mile range, in urban use.

Project partner Haydale Composite Solutions will develop a 700bar hydrogen tank to suit the emerging refuelling standards and enable the range extension for the vehicle.

Ben Todd, managing director at Arcola Energy, said: "This project builds on many years of our work developing and integrating hydrogen fuel cell systems into vehicles ranging from lightweight two-seaters to double-decker buses."

Importantly, it will support expansion of Arcola Energy's engineering services offering to include the whole hydrogen-electric hybrid drive train from H<sub>2</sub> tank to wheels.

Todd continued: "From our experience in supplying zero-emission vans to end-users, we are only too aware of the absence of a zero-emission 3.5-tonne commercial vehicle in the marketplace. Thus, we are delighted to be working with other UK-based partners to deliver and commercially trial a scalable, practical approach to addressing this."

"We're grateful for the consistent support the Government has shown for this project and other low emission vehicle programmes, supporting the development of a UK supply chain for this and other much-needed drivetrain solutions."

Commercial Group will trial the vehicle – the first fully zero-emission vehicle in its hydrogen-powered fleet.

Arthur Hindmarch, managing director of Commercial Group, said: "We are tremendously excited to be involved in a project that is not just at the cutting edge of zero-emission vehicle development, but which promises to re-invigorate the UK's drivetrain manufacturing industry, harnessing the country's long-standing capability in this area."

"We believe that hydrogen-powered transport solutions are a key part of our zero-emission future and are proud to be an early adopter."

The Government says the multi-million pound Low Emission Freight and Logistics Trial will help the UK meet its CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets and represents another step towards its target for all new cars and vans to be zero emission by 2040.

Transport minister John Hayes concluded: "Each one of these successful projects will help cut vehicle emissions, improving air quality and reducing pollution in towns and cities."



# Check before death crash ‘wholly inadequate’

Haulage boss and mechanic jailed for manslaughter following horror collisions that killed four

By Gareth Roberts

Commercial fleet operators have been urged to review their duty of care obligations after the deaths of four people were described as “wholly preventable”.

Mitzi Steady, 4, Stephen Vaughan, 34, Philip Allen, 52, and Robert Parker, 59, were killed when the brakes failed on a tipper truck in Bath. The 32-tonne lorry owned by Grittenham Haulage struck and killed Steady as she crossed a road with her gran Margaret Rogers, who suffered life-changing injuries.

The HGV, loaded with aggregate, then collided with two cars, killing Vaughan, Allen and Parker, and injuring Karla Brennan.

Matthew Gordon, who owns Grittenham Haulage, and self-employed mechanic Peter Wood were sentenced at Bristol Crown Court on January 27 to seven and a-half years and five years three months, respectively.

Gordon was also banned from being a company director for 12 years.

Philip Potter, 20, who was driving the truck, was cleared of dangerous and careless driving following a trial last December.

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety at RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents), said: “This awful case shows the devastation that can occur when organisations do not meet their duty of care. Four lives were cut short, and many more have been changed forever.”

“The court, in delivering guilty verdicts and subsequent jail sentences, has recognised this fact, and we hope this will prompt other organisations to now review their own systems.”

The jury heard that driver Potter was following owner Gordon down a steep lane when the brakes on the 11-year-old lorry failed.

Witnesses saw smoke coming from his truck and smelled the brakes burning as he drove down the hill. The ABS warning light – indicating problems with the braking system – was also on.

Potter told the court he would never have driven the lorry had he known the brakes were faulty.

Adam Vaitilingam QC, prosecuting, labelled Grittenham Haulage as “a shambles from start to finish”. The Wiltshire-based business had failed to carry out the recommended brake efficiency tests on the vehicle, which had almost 450,000 miles on the clock at the time of the incident.

It was supposed to have a transport manager – responsible for ensuring the lorries were safe – but did not in the months leading up to the fatal incident.



*“Transport owners must adhere to a duty of care, which includes regular maintenance and servicing of all vehicles”*

DCI Richard Ocone, Avon & Somerset Police

**7.5**

years jail term handed out to company boss

**5.25**

years sentence for self-employed mechanic

Wood, however, was employed by Grittenham Haulage to inspect and help maintain the lorries, carrying out inspections every six weeks.

The final safety check he carried out was described as “wholly inadequate”.

The judge told Gordon, of Dauntsey, Wiltshire, and Wood, of Brinkworth, Wiltshire, that the lorry had “truly serious faults” that were “obvious to anyone”.

DCI Richard Ocone of Avon & Somerset Police, said: “Detailed and complex investigations showed many of the faults on the vehicle were longstanding – highlighted by the fact that the brakes on the lorry at the time of the crash were totally inadequate, having an overall efficiency of just 28%.”

“If there is just one single lesson to be learned from this sad and tragic incident, it is that company transport owners must adhere to a duty of care, which includes regular maintenance and servicing of all vehicles.”

“The public needs complete reassurance that this work is undertaken regularly and remains a top priority for all companies.”

Gordon was granted an operator’s licence in December 2013, the first time he had run such a business.

Online

For more details on the case, visit: [www.commercialfleet.org.uk](http://www.commercialfleet.org.uk): January 30

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# Fleets drive improvements to the Dart Charge

Highways England listens to fleet concerns over M25 river crossing linking Kent and Essex

By Matt de Prez

**H**ighways England will introduce improvements to Dart Charge following consultation with fleet trade association ACFO.

Dart Charge account holders will benefit from enhancements to the crossing's web portal allowing them to search for a vehicle by registration number and sort a fleet list alphabetically.

Problems with payment mismatching for pay-on-use drivers (where the payments made have not been applied to the correct crossings) should also be resolved in the update.

Debbie Floyde, ACFO board director, said: "At a meeting in December Dart Charge was able to demonstrate the enhancements made to its website, which will launch very soon, and they include many of the suggestions made by our members.

"We have also had feedback that the turnaround time on PCNs has been significantly reduced."

Sarah Green, head of Dart Charge services, confirmed that the changes will be implemented shortly. She said: "We are working on a range of updates and will be providing more details in due course."

The updates should be well received by fleet operators who, in a recent *Fleet News* poll, highlighted that more than 60% have not seen a reduction in the number of penalty charge notices (PCNs) received from Dart Charge in the last six months.

Congestion at the tunnel and bridge crossing is a major issue for commercial fleets. Tailbacks are still a common sight especially when approaching northbound.

Highways England told ACFO this is due to lorries and HGVs being in the incorrect lanes when approaching the tunnels and having to be re-routed.

Malcolm Bingham, head of policy at the Freight Transport Association (FTA), said: "Congestion on approach could be reduced if the signage was clearer – informing lorries which lanes they need to be in ahead of the crossing. The taller vehicle lanes for the tunnels are on the right hand side but HGVs will generally be on the left."

Bingham also thinks that the marshalling process needs to be refined: "Our members often report that when they are carrying dangerous goods they are instructed to pull off and then re-join. There should be a system that allows recognised operators to be let straight through."



The bridge over the River Thames forms the north-to-south element of the Dartford crossing

## £108

is maximum fine if the PCN remains unpaid for more than 28 days

The river crossing, on the M25 motorway, introduced cashless payments in November 2014 in a bid to reduce congestion at toll booths. But drivers who forget to pay the crossing fee (£3 for vans and £6 for trucks) within 24 hours will face a fine of £70 (£35 if paid within 14 days or £108 after 28 days).

To avoid PCNs altogether fleets can set up a Dart Charge account. Crossings for any vehicles added to the account will automatically be charged to the operator. Account holders also benefit from a discounted toll rate of £2.63 for vans or £5.19 for trucks.

Daily rental companies have reported issues too, claiming customers were unable to speak with Dart Charge representatives to resolve fines as they were not the registered keeper of the vehicle.

Bingham said: "Hire vehicles cause the majority of the problems. The PCN times coupled with the time it takes the hire companies to forward on fines is too long. So we welcome any changes that improve on that.

"Hire companies often delay the time it takes them to take a vehicle off-hire, one member received a fine six months after they had returned a vehicle so operators need to be on the case."

According to Floyde, daily rental vehicles, which make regular crossings in the hands of many drivers, continue to be problematic. "I feel the daily rental companies should look to register all their vehicles [with Dart Charge] and add the minimal crossing charge to rentals which would eradicate all PCN's in this sector," she said.

Crossing users can pay the toll in advance, or until midnight the day after travelling, by phone or online. Any unused crossings will remain in credit against the vehicle for a year.



*"Hire vehicles cause the majority of the problems. The PCN times coupled with the time it takes the hire companies to forward on fines is too long"*

Malcolm Bingham, FTA

# Orange 'peeling' to save more than £450,000

County council ditches policy of painting vehicles in a uniform colour due to funding cuts

By John Maslen

Local authority fleets are being urged to search for savings to protect frontline services from cuts.

The call comes after one local authority reduced spending by more than £450,000 by ending its policy of painting vehicles orange.

Derbyshire County Council operates nearly 500 vehicles, of which 440 are orange, ranging from vans to minibuses and lorries.

Historically, when vehicles have been replaced, the council has spent £1,000-2,000 painting them or using vehicle wrapping services to match its corporate colours.

However, the council is facing £70 million in funding cuts over the next two years and is searching for ways to reduce costs without affecting frontline services.

Vehicles will still require replacement but the council will order nearly all of them in white to cut costs. The move is expected to reduce fleet spending by £455,000 during a full fleet replacement cycle.

A tender will be published within the next two months, before suppliers are appointed in August.

Council leaders were told in a meeting last year that current national procurement framework agreements do not meet the council's needs, so it is planning to create its own tender for a maximum four-year term.

Derbyshire County Council cabinet member Dean Collins, said: "We are facing unprecedented cuts. By 2021 we will be spending a third less on providing services than we were before cuts to local council funding began in 2010, which is why we have replaced very few council vehicles.



Only vehicles requiring high visibility will continue to be painted orange by Derbyshire County Council

## 440

number of vehicles painted orange by Derbyshire County Council out of its total fleet of 500

"Our previous contract for orange vehicles was cost-effective but now it has finished we are going back out to the market to secure a new deal. We are looking to replace around 400 vehicles with an estimated value of £14.5m and by buying white vehicles in future we will keep costs down."

The council's 44 gritting and other emergency response vehicles will continue to be orange so they are highly visible.

The rest of the fleet includes 15 cars, which are unaffected by the colour scheme, and more than 300 vans and minibuses.

Local authorities and public sector fleets throughout the UK are coming under increasing pressure to find savings following years of budget cuts.

Some public sector fleets have merged their procurement programmes in a bid to increase discounts from suppliers and reduce administrative costs. In one case, 28 bluelight fleets joined forces to form their own buying consortium.

Arranged by West Midlands Police, the deal sees forces from Cornwall to Northumbria club together to take advantage of standard, unified specifications and make savings. More than 2,000 vehicles will be delivered over the two years of the contract. A similar deal has been arranged for forces in the north of England and Scotland.

Mark Lovett, head of commercial vehicles at LeasePlan, believes it is important for managers to regularly take a fresh look at their fleets.

He said: "Fleet managers can look back at what has changed since the last time they reviewed their fleet, determining the best, fit-for-purpose vehicles for their organisation today and in the future. When it comes to costs, there are many ways to cut back."

The leasing giant has issued a six-point checklist for public sector fleets to help them identify savings (see panel)

TaxPayers Alliance spokesperson Dia Chakravarty concluded: "Reports like the one from Derbyshire County Council show that smarter spending can save taxpayers' money without family budgets being squeezed by increasing taxes to fund frontline services.

"We always consider initiatives like this good news. Other councils should look into how they can emulate this. Every council has its own priorities and challenges, but they should look to each other for best practice for how they can make savings that don't affect frontline services."

## Six-point checklist for local authority fleet savings

■ **Vehicle colour** – even if a colour is offered free of charge fleet managers should be mindful that choosing a 'distinctive' or less popular colour could still impact on residual values.

■ **Livery** – fleet managers can reduce costs by holding back on excessive designs. The design should be something simple, if it is needed at all.

■ **Specialist functions** – the vehicles in a fleet need to do a job, perform well and be fit for purpose, but not so specialist that it costs more than necessary.

■ **Review contents** – fleet managers should consider the inventory that is carried, so they are not using an unnecessarily large van to carry lots of stock 'just in case'. This will reduce the size of the vehicle, the weight (and therefore fuel spend) and also the amount of equipment that could be targeted by thieves.

■ **Clean sheet of paper** – it is important to review the vehicles actually needed now, rather than just repeating what has always been done. A good example is with housing associations, where historically a van long enough to carry a kitchen worktop may have been required. Today, these are probably delivered by the kitchen company and therefore a smaller vehicle will suffice.

■ **Spend to save** – fleet managers should ensure vehicles have parking sensors and possibly cameras to avoid the minor scrapes which cost time and money and increase vehicle downtime.

Source: LeasePlan



"Smarter spending can save taxpayers' money"

Dia Chakravarty,  
TaxPayers Alliance

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United Kingdom



Fleet management is riddled with issues, queries and uncertainty, often caused by legislation. Eamonn Brennan, FTA manager of van information, looks at common questions raised by fleets with its member advice clinic

**Q** I drive a VW Transporter which has a kerb weight of 1993kgs. The manufacturer says it can tow 2200kgs maximum. If I tow a trailer, is this legal or do I need a tachograph?

**A** The key area to identify what trailer weight can be towed is to find out what the vehicle's stated maximum gross train weight is. In your scenario the manufacturer has advised that a maximum trailer weight of 2200kgs can be towed but you must also take note that the maximum gross train weight of the combination should never be exceeded. You will find this gross train weight on the manufacturer plate which will be fitted to the vehicle itself.

If in doubt, contact the vehicle manufacturer or dealer who will advise further.

From a drivers' hours legislation point of view, find out the gross vehicle weight of the towing vehicle and the maximum authorised mass of the trailer and if the total exceeds 3500kgs then the vehicle will need to have a tachograph fitted and the driver will be subject to EU Drivers' hours rules.

However, there are exemptions. This link will take you to the full list of them: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/drivers-hours-goods-vehicles/1-eu-and-aetr-rules-on-drivers-hours>



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**Q** One of our drivers has a full car licence, but his HGV category C licence has a code 78 (automatic vehicles only) attached to it. I have been told he can get this restriction removed. Is this correct?

**A** From January 2014 the Driving Standards Agency (at that time) agreed to changes in the vehicles that could be used to take a driving test for large goods (and passenger) vehicles. The main changes affecting lorry, bus and coach drivers being:

- removing the need for eight-forward gear ratios for large test vehicles (category C)
- allowing people who take a lorry or bus test (category C and D) in an automatic vehicle to get manual entitlement for those vehicles, if they already have a manual entitlement for cars, lorries or buses, with or without trailers (category B, B+E, C, C+E, C1, C1+E, D, D+E, D1+E)

Existing drivers can also get this manual entitlement when they exchange or upgrade a licence if already a lorry, bus or coach driver and have a manual licence in any of those categories.



**?** Do you have an issue that needs resolving?  
Get the solution by emailing us at: [commercialfleet@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:commercialfleet@bauermedia.co.uk)

# Rules & regulations

The FTA looks at the latest issues to affect vans and trucks, including safe use of electronic gadgets and the status of bus and cycle lanes

## Not the right time for the presents



Now the festive season has passed and as routines return to normal, you may find that some of your drivers have received new electronic gadgets as gifts, for example mobile phones, satellite navigation devices and iPods.

This is a perfect time for you to remind all drivers of company policy for using such devices in a safe and legal manner and of the regulations and potential penalties for non-compliance.

Areas of legislation to be aware of include.

### Mobile phones

Construction and use regulation 110(1) and (2) 'prohibit a person from driving, or causing or permitting a person to drive, a motor vehicle on a road if the driver is using a hand-held mobile phone or similar device'.

The penalty for driving a vehicle while using a hand-held mobile phone or other hand-held communication device (other than a two-way radio) is a fine of £100 plus three penalty points on the driver's licence.

Drivers could also be prosecuted for failing to have proper control of the vehicle, or the more serious offence of dangerous driving.

### Satellite navigation devices

The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) regulations 1986, section 104 (drivers control) states 'no person shall drive or cause or permit any other person to drive, a motor vehicle on a road if he is in such a position that he cannot have proper control of the vehicle or have a full view of the road ahead'.

The Road Traffic Act 1988, section 41D states 'a person who contravenes or fails to comply with a construction and use requirement, as to not driving a motor vehicle in a position which does not give proper control or a full view of the road and traffic ahead, or not causing or permitting the driving of a motor vehicle by another person in such a position is guilty of an offence'.

Under the fixed penalty offences, a driver can be fined £100 plus three penalty points on their licence for a breach of a requirement to control the vehicle.

As you can see from the above examples it is imperative your drivers are aware of the consequences of not complying with the regulations surrounding the safe use of such devices while driving.

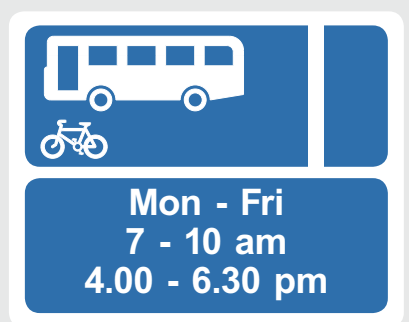
## BUS AND CYCLE LANES

The most extensive types of priority lane are the bus/cycle ones designed to help buses beat urban congestion and improve safety for cyclists.

These lanes usually operate during the peak periods, 07.00-10.00 and 16.00-19.00; all day, 07.00-19.00; or for 24 hours. During the relevant times parking is banned but loading/unloading is allowed – provided there are no pips on the kerb indicating a loading ban.

### Cycle lanes

Cycle lanes may be advisory or mandatory. You should avoid entering advisory cycle lanes (indicated by a broken white line) if possible but parking, loading and unloading is allowed if there are no yellow lines or kerb pips indicating a restriction. It is an offence to enter, park, load or unload in a mandatory cycle lane (indicated by a solid white line) even if there are no yellow lines or kerb pips.





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# Reliable transport is important ingredient of the finest cuisine

When your clients are the leading chefs in some of the UK's top starred restaurants, turning up late or with produce that is not completely fresh is simply not an option

By John Charles

**D**ependable transport is business-critical to Wellocks as it provides fresh fruit, vegetables, dairy, poultry and dry goods to 1,200 restaurants, six days a week across the UK.

Missed or late deliveries are not an option for the Nelson, Lancashire-headquartered, family-owned business, which operates a fast-expanding 117-strong commercial vehicle fleet delivering ingredients to some of the UK's most prestigious hotels and restaurants.

Wellocks can trace its association with food back to 1946 and a traditional greengrocers in Silsden, Yorkshire. Reflecting the upmarket image of its customers, it has invested in a state-of-the-art custom-built van, truck and trailer fleet.

Vehicles deliver to the likes of the Gleneagles Hotel, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club and the Waldorf Astoria in Scotland, the luxury Gidleigh Park Hotel in Devon, Emirates' first class airlines and the five-star hospitality suites at Manchester United's Old Trafford stadium.

Shannon Maguire, one of the company's four Nelson-based transport managers, says: "Our vehicles make around 6,000 deliveries every week, all over the UK. Every single one needs to be on time, with the ingredients in perfect condition on arrival. Our customers are premium brands, they expect us to provide a service to match."

Underlining the importance of maintaining an efficient and reliable vehicle delivery fleet is the fact that in 2016 Wellocks opened its own 'Formula One' service centre, employing its own mechanics with every vehicle undergoing a weekly workshop check (see panel on page 18).

In the past 70 years, the business has grown significantly and now employs more than 400 people. It began by supplying all types of fruit and vegetables to greengrocers and market stalls. Then, more than 20 years ago, the company expanded to supply freshly prepared ingredients to the restaurant, pub and hotel trade.

From a £9 million turnover business employing 70 people just five years ago, the company has expanded into a £50m operation and, to keep up with demand, Wellocks has developed a 'hub and spoke' transport operation.

All produce and ingredients are prepared at the company's head office where a fleet of four Mercedes Actros 184 refrigerated articulated lorries are based. These deliver daily to regional hubs at Tewkesbury (serving the south west), Aylesbury (serving London and the south east) and Motherwell in Scotland.

At each of the regional hubs the trucks are unloaded and a fleet of approximately 70 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter vans divided between the locations deliver the foodstuff to hotels, restaurants and other eating establishments.

At Nelson, Wellocks has the other 13 Sprinter vans on the fleet, along with 11 7.5-tonne and three five-tonne vans and nine class two HGVs, all Mercedes-Benz vehicles. These perform the same distribution role.

Additionally, the company operates seven Citroën Berlingo vans driven by sales reps.

After making deliveries in time for breakfast, vehicles are then routed to farms to collect fresh foodstuffs from growers and producers. The vans then return to the hubs where the produce is loaded onto the refrigerated, articulated lorries which return to Nelson for preparation in readiness for next-day delivery and the round-the-clock delivery operation starts again.

Additionally, Wellocks works with growers throughout the world to ensure the finest ingredients are delivered to Britain's leading eating establishments, many of them Michelin starred.

The paying guests at the hotels and restaurants Wellocks supplies expect the ultimate gastronomic experience with the freshest, highest quality food served, which, for Maguire, means missed or late deliveries are not an option.

That's why the same attention to detail paid by the chefs in the kitchens that Wellocks serves is given to the fleet operation.

Far from trucks and trailers being "off-the-shelf", Wellocks works with its vehicle conversion partners to design and build what it believes are the "ultimate vehicles" to meet its requirements.

Recently Wellocks took delivery of its latest trailer designed and built by Finnish company Ekeri, which is known for its easy loading transport solutions. The trailer was designed with the latest mechanics and side-opening doors to give quicker access to goods, helping Wellocks deliver to customers as quickly as possible.

The 14ft-high trailer was Wellocks's first side-opening trailer and is the largest in its fleet. The extra space makes transporting ingredients between distribution hubs across the UK more efficient by reducing the

*"Vehicle management is a key element of our business – we continually invest in the best upgrades and the best technology available"*

Shannon Maguire, Wellocks





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Shannon Maguire is one of four transport managers at Wellocks. He joined as a stepping stone but ended up with a career

## Fleet spotlight: Wellocks



number of journeys needed – thus also keeping the company's carbon footprint in check – and getting deliveries to customers more quickly.

The trailer has temperature-controlled technology to keep produce fresh and in perfect condition. The side-opening design makes for much easier access and loading – Wellocks manages a speedy 40-minute turnaround emptying and restocking.

What's more, the most recent purpose-built Euro 6-compliant Sprinter additions to the fleet have a 1,000kg weight capacity allowing an extra 200kg payload and a refrigerated system to keep food orders perfect. The revolutionary body means Wellocks can load more crates, making distribution and deliveries even more efficient.

Maguire says: "Vehicle management is a key element of our business – we continually invest in the best upgrades and the best technology available to ensure our supplies are collected, stored and delivered to our customers at the highest standards and in the most efficient way."

Wellocks's fleet continues to expand. Just weeks before the end of 2016, the company took delivery of four new Sprinters; two replacing existing vans, the others additional units.

During 2017 Maguire anticipates the company taking delivery of the latest 12-tonne and 15-tonne Mercedes-Benz vehicles to replace 7.5-tonne models as customers' orders increase and the company balances the need for load space with a desire to minimise its carbon footprint – the fleet clocks up more than a million miles a year.

The four Mercedes Actros 184 refrigerated articulated lorries have been brought in on Mercedes-Benz hire purchase agreements, with virtually every other vehicle bought outright. Vehicles are sold through private sales with replacement cycles dictated by individual truck or van

mileage and condition. Some vans have been on the fleet seven years and have covered 500,000 miles with other vehicles replaced at three years.

Further underlining the importance of operating an efficient and reliable all-diesel vehicle delivery fleet was Wellocks's June 2016 decision to forge a partnership with Shell and utilise the company's euroShell card.

Maguire said access to a fuel supplier with more than 1,100 forecourts that could match its own nationwide network requirements – vehicles currently journey along 100 different routes although that is set to rise as the company's customer base increases – was influential in the decision to switch. Previously it used a mix of fuel cards and fuel outlets, including its own bunkered facilities.

Maguire is a former gas engineer who joined Wellocks in January 2012 as a van driver before becoming a transport manager later that year. He says: "Having Shell fuel cards is far more convenient for our drivers and cost-effective for the business. There are Shell service stations wherever our drivers need them so we no longer have to factor refuelling detours into our delivery schedules. We've also been able to stop storing tanked fuel at almost all of our own sites.

"Vehicle delivery is critical to getting the finest ingredients to chefs throughout the country on time. Having a fuel station on those 100 routes is absolutely critical to us."

Shell Card Online enables head office managers to view drivers' transactions and fuel spend, monitor driver/vehicle fuel efficiency and receive real-time alerts to prevent fraudulent card use.

Maguire says: "We decided to partner with Shell Fuel Cards directly because we can monitor fuel activity and MPG on vehicles and drivers, so it helps drive the financials of the business which helps us invest.



### Factfile

**Fleet size** 117 vehicles  
**Funding method** hire purchase (Mercedes Actros 184 HGVs) and outright purchase  
**Operating cycle** typically three to seven years dependent on mileage and condition  
**Key brands on fleet** Mercedes-Benz, Citroën

"I can see where our vehicles are filling up when sitting in an office in Lancashire."

Wellocks spends about £1.2m on diesel annually and the company is forecasting that use of the "scientifically formulated" Shell FuelSave Diesel will improve fleet fuel efficiency as it is claimed to prevent deposits forming in the engine.

## Opening own 'Formula One' service centre has proved a fruitful move

Technology in today's cars – often referred to as computers on wheels – frequently has its roots in Formula One.

Wellocks's senior management often talk about having a Formula One operating model in place: sleek, efficient and fast-paced.

Finance director Michael Beech says: "To succeed as a business and differentiate ourselves from the competition, we have to behave like a premium brand in everything we do. Right from the quality of our ingredients through to the standard of our vehicles and the professionalism of our drivers."

One of the most recent additions that helps promote such an image was the opening of the company's own 'Formula One' service centre at its Nelson HQ.

Employing four full-time mechanics, all service, maintenance and repair (SMR) work on the four Mercedes Actros 184 refrigerated articulated lorries and the approximate 40 other commercial vehicles is undertaken in the garage. That includes all Operator Licence compliance checks and pre-MOT checks.

Transport manager Shannon Maguire says: "We have a great relationship with the local Mercedes-Benz dealer. Any work we cannot handle the dealer



undertakes on a 24-hour turnaround basis. MOTs are also completed at the dealership."

The opening of the garage has helped to further reduce vehicle downtime. Historically SMR work was undertaken at a smaller garage in a neighbouring village which the company leased.

Maguire explains: "The garage operates as a 'drive

through' with SMR work and regular checks undertaken on all vehicles."

SMR work on the vehicles based at Wellocks's other three hubs is undertaken at local Mercedes-Benz dealerships. Additionally, on a quarterly basis, the company's mechanics travel to each hub to complete their own vehicle inspections and checks.



Wellocks's new Ekeri-built trailer gives quicker access to its contents, speeding loading and unloading

Maguire says: "The more reliable and efficient our vehicles, the better our service is to customers and the more profitable we are as a business. Through using Shell FuelSave Diesel, we expect to see a reduction in our fuel costs, a decrease in maintenance expenditure and a fall in the number of vehicle breakdowns.

"With our business expanding, this is particularly important. The less time and money we spend on maintenance, the more we can focus on attracting and serving our customers."

Safety is critical to all fleets and it is no different at Wellocks, which has equipped vehicles with a range of technologies including: on-board cameras monitoring drivers when behind the wheel; further cameras monitoring driving behaviour and recording video footage in the event of a collision or other incident; and reversing sensors.

All vehicles are equipped with TomTom telematics, enabling managers to track each vehicle and monitor driver behaviour via a range of data reports measuring factors such as speed, excessive braking and harsh steering. Furthermore, the telemetry aids journey and route planning and enables Wellocks to inform customers how soon they can expect a delivery.

Underpinning Wellocks's safety focus is on-going driver training – a former driver is the company's driver trainer – that includes regular driver reviews based on performance, awareness and management report information.

Maguire says: "Logistics is a huge part of our business and we are always striving to deliver the perfect service. We're always looking for smarter and more efficient transport solutions – from smoother loading to the best tracking devices – to

*"We're always looking for smarter and more efficient transport solutions – from smoother loading to the best tracking devices – to move the business forward"*

*Shannon Maguire, Wellocks*

move the business forward and ensure that our deliveries are on time and in perfect condition."

Since joining Wellocks, Maguire's career has progressed with him gaining his Class 1 and Class 2 HGV qualifications as well as his Driver CPC on the way to becoming a fully-fledged transport manager.

Alongside the company's three other transport managers – Craig Coupe, John Staveley and Rado Celko – Maguire is responsible for managing the fleet from the company's headquarters, although frequent journeys are made to the other hubs.

Maguire says: "Since I joined it has been a whirlwind and that pace is continuing. The business is expanding all the time which means the fleet is growing. I joined Wellocks as a stepping stone, but the job I have has become my career."

With only a few years' transport manager experience, Maguire acknowledges he has much to learn and highlights compliance as the single biggest issue.

"Every day is different and there are always new challenges and issues to resolve whether that is with regulations, with vehicles or with drivers. As

a former driver, I can understand the issues that impact on them and their views," he says.

"Compliance is critical and we must operate by the book. But the transport managers also have to ensure the fleet is operating at optimum efficiency. Wellocks's success is down to sourcing the finest ingredients and supplying them to the best chefs throughout the country."

The business depends upon the natural world so it is little surprise that, while its transport operation is essential, the company also has a commitment to environmental protection.

That extends from the introduction of vehicles that maximise space to minimise journeys to delivering ingredients in environmentally-friendly returnable plastic crates, which are tracked so Wellocks knows where they are, ensuring that waylaid packing crates don't end up in landfill.

**Online** More commercial fleet profiles at [commercialfleet.org/fleet-profiles](http://commercialfleet.org/fleet-profiles)

# CROSS-PARTY COMMITTEE PUTS POLITICS TO ONE SIDE TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE

Stephen Briers interviews Louise Ellman MP, chair of the influential TSC, which can summon company bosses and ministers to give evidence to its inquiries

**W**ho holds the Department for Transport to account? Decisions taken by the Government office have major, long-lasting implications for fleets, whether it's investment in road infrastructure, action to tackle safety, approving trials of autonomous cars, incentivising uptake of alternative vehicles or even wider travel matters such as airport expansion and HS2 rail links.

Does the DfT make the right decisions? Could more money be better invested in other areas? Can it justify its policies? This is where the Transport Select Committee (TSC) comes in.

The TSC is made up of 11 Members of Parliament, appointed by the House of Commons and drawn from the three largest political parties (Conservative, Labour and SNP). It is responsible for examining the expenditure, administration and policy of DfT and associated public bodies, like Highways England, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the traffic commissioners.

However, its remit extends further, into other motoring matters of public interest. Over the past 15 months, for example, two major automotive stories aroused interest: the Volkswagen NOx emissions scandal, which included vans as well as cars, and the Vauxhall Zafira fires (the recent news about Corsa fires could now come under its gaze).

In both instances, the TSC summoned senior executives at the companies to explain what happened and how they intended to resolve the issues. These sessions are often hostile and uncompromising – just check the YouTube clips of Volkswagen UK MD Paul Willis.

Louise Ellman has chaired the committee for the past eight years and has been a member since 2002. Key to its success,

she says, is having members who can put aside party politics to work together for a common goal.

"Overwhelmingly that does apply; we try very hard to concentrate on the issue in front of us," Ellman tells *Commercial Fleet* at her parliamentary office in Portcullis House, adjacent to the Houses of Parliament.

"Our aim is to try to improve transport for the public and identify issues of concern, conducting inquiries where we think it is appropriate into different topics which we decide."

Committee members have full autonomy and are completely independent from parliamentary bias. It slots in the topical inquiries around its main transport scrutiny responsibilities.

Each inquiry has its terms of reference. These are made public via the website and the TSC invites interested parties to submit evidence. It will also call relevant people to provide face-to-face evidence, including ministers.

Once TSC is satisfied with the information it has gathered, it draws up a report with recommendations which goes to the appropriate minister. That minister is then duty-bound to respond.

"Our aim is two-fold: it's to highlight issues of concern and to bring about change where we feel that's justified," Ellman says. "And it's to influence what happens. We're not an arm of government so we don't have a power to enforce something, but we definitely do influence."

The Volkswagen emissions scandal is one area where the involvement of TSC prompted the Government to raise its game.

"We could see it was a matter of concern. And although it is far from resolved, our actions have made the Government become much more involved," Ellman says. "We're not

*"Our aim is two-fold: to highlight issues of concern and influence what happens"*

*Louise Ellman,  
TSC chair*

## Who's who: the Transport Select Committee members



Louise Ellman,  
Labour (chair)



Clive Efford,  
Labour



Robert Ffello,  
Labour



Karl McCartney,  
Conservative



Stewart Malcolm  
McDonald, SNP



Mark Menzies,  
Conservative



## In the spotlight: Transport Select Committee



"It's quite possible somebody could break down on the lane during the night and it not be known that they're there. There is technology that would alert the control agents, but that wasn't going to be fitted so we've said something must be done about that."

The DfT is ploughing ahead with the roll-out, which Ellman believes is "cost-led because you get more road space for less money if you use the hard shoulder – I think that's what's driving that".

She adds: "They're resisting but I'm not happy with it and I want to stop the roll-out. But if they're not going to do that, they've got to do something about those refuges – including the length of the refuge area for haulage vehicles and how you can safely get a vehicle in to tow them out if they break down – and more information for people on the motorway."

In its response to the TSC, released in December, the DfT has ceded some ground: while the roll-out will continue, it is committing to take action on creating more refuge areas and fitting a radar-based vehicle detection system to reduce the risk to broken down vehicles.

The DfT also intends to meet with TCS shortly to discuss some of its other concerns.

Continuously monitoring a situation is key to the Transport Select Committee's success.

"That's one of the secrets: you mustn't just produce a report and then leave it if it's something you feel strongly about and it's got public resonance," Ellman explains.

"You have to keep raising it at the right time. We call ministers in front of the committee for general questions and that's when we might well raise issues like this. What is happening on this topic? What is being done? They know that we do that as well."

The committee was heavily involved in investigating skills shortages in the haulage sector, particularly to do with driver

*"The TSC's remit is so wide – road, rail, air, sea – and it's so important to everything"*

*Louise Ellman,  
TSC chair*

shortages. The Government accepted many of the findings in its subsequent report and has since set up a working party within DfT in conjunction with the industry to implement some of the proposals.

"The industry was very pleased we did that," Ellman says. "It's a great example of our success. And while people might have been thinking about that for a long time we specifically said 'we think you should do it' and we picked that up."

She adds: "We were really shocked at the take up of female drivers, young drivers aged 18 to 25 and black and minority ethnic drivers."

The TSC's latest inquiry is looking at urban road congestion, with the first oral session starting last month. Its aim is to identify cost-effective and safe strategies for managing limited road space in towns and cities, minimising disruption to local communities and businesses, and keeping traffic flowing.

The proposal came from TSC's own members during a debate on the Buses Bill. Views were divided on whether bus priority lanes were a good or bad idea, so Ellman proposed widening the debate to look more generally at roads management, usage and congestion.

She says: "That's going to be very interesting to your audience: who gets priority, is it the buses, is it the cycle lanes? Is it the regular drivers who are driving in and out of metropolitan areas? Is it the people going to school? Who has priority on the roads and how do we make that better?"

Ellman is the longest serving member of the Transport Select Committee. So what is its appeal to her?

"Its remit is so wide – road, rail, air, sea – and it's so important to everything: how industry functions, environmental issues, how people get around," she replies. "We can make a difference; over time you see changes and different ideas."



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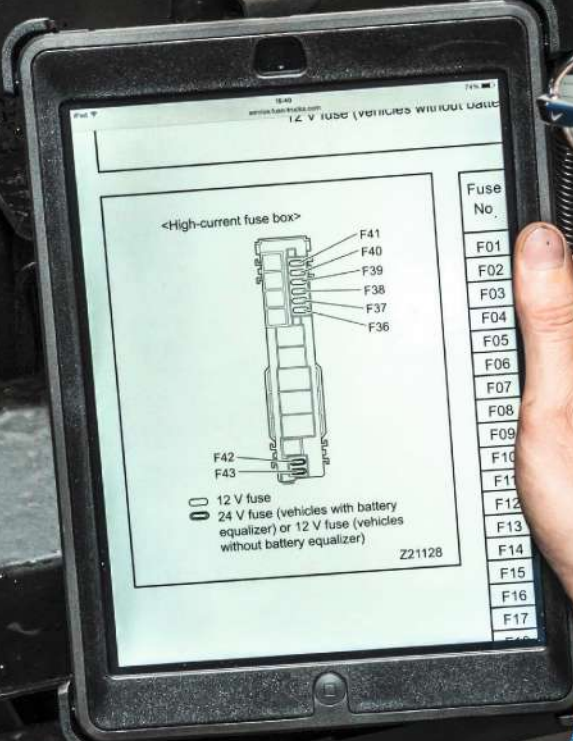
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# RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP

Many fleets avoid dealer workshops and repair their vans and trucks at their own facilities instead. We ask why this works for them and what tips they have for others considering a similar approach

By John Lewis

**V**an and truck manufacturers and their dealer networks are fond of arguing that it makes no sense for operators with their own workshops to continue to service their fleets in-house.

With the advent of Euro 6 and the greater use of on-board electronics, vehicles have become more complicated, they contend. That means more investment in diagnostics tools and technician training.

Why spend all that money when the franchised dealer just up the road has already done so?

Demolishing the workshop creates more opportunities for a transport fleet too, they add. It could give the business space to expand its warehouse or extend a factory production line. Alternatively, the land the workshop occupies could be sold off, giving the fleet a useful cash injection.

There is a strong counter-argument, however, and it is one espoused by Arthur Spriggs & Sons. Celebrating its centenary in 2018, the Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire-based transport company is busy setting up a chain of big, all-makes workshops under the Spriggs & Sons Commercials banner that will maintain third-party vehicles as well as the firm's 180 trucks.

"We have one at Tewkesbury, we're opening one at Hailsham, East Sussex, we aim to have one in West Sussex and we'll have another in Rushden, Northamptonshire, as well," says Perry Reeves, who runs the workshop operation. "I reckon we'll have all of them in operation by the end of this year."

Reeves spent many years working for Mercedes-Benz van and truck dealership Rossetts, which has outlets in Sussex and Hampshire.

There is no denying the scale of the 4.5-acre Tewkesbury set-up. It has 17 full-length bays, five inspection pits and two ATF (authorised testing facility) lanes.

Two MOT bays are used by the company's own technicians to carry out Class 4, 5 and 7 tests, including tests on vans grossing at up to 3.5 tonnes. The site is open from 6am to midnight Monday to Friday – 24-hour opening is not far away says Reeves – and from 6am to mid-day on Saturdays and it holds a £360,000 stock of parts.

"We always have two technicians on call 24/7 to deal with emergencies and we're willing to work at weekends and at customer premises by arrangement," he says.

### Newly-acquired site

Other facilities include a tachograph calibration centre and Reeves was planning to have two new 28-tonne-capacity lifts installed at the time of writing. Until recently some 75% of the Spriggs fleet was based at the same premises but has now been transferred to another, newly-acquired, site nearby.

Arthur Spriggs developed its in-house service and repair operation some years ago because it wanted greater control over how its vehicles were maintained and because it was by not happy with the quality of the work of some dealers.

The move has been a success, with a consistent 100% MOT pass rate achieved.

"What we do is put all the trucks due for an MOT through the ATF bays ourselves first and identify and deal with any faults," Reeves says. "Then when the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) tester arrives and puts the truck through the same process, it passes."

However, taking this route has not been without its challenges, especially on recruiting technicians.

"At times it has been a nightmare, but it's the commercial vehicle industry's fault and we're paying the price for it," Reeves says. "For years we didn't bother to train technicians and the result is that we've got guys in their twenties, guys in their fifties and a big gap in between."

When it comes to attracting technicians the answer is to provide good working conditions, says Reeves, and a decent hourly rate of pay. "We concentrate on that rather than

*"What we do is put all the trucks due for an MOT through the ATF bays ourselves first and identify and deal with any faults"*

*Perry Reeves, Arthur Spriggs & Sons*



**£360,000**

the value of the parts held by Spriggs & Sons Commercial at its in-house workshop in Tewkesbury

**62**

Mercedes-Benz trucks are run by Massey Wilcox and serviced under a special arrangement with a Mercedes-Benz dealer

paying bonuses because I've yet to see a truck workshop bonus scheme that actually works," he says.

"The difficulty with such schemes is that the guys who do inspection work benefit because they can carry out lots of inspections during the working day and are therefore viewed as productive," he continues. "However, the more highly-skilled diagnosticians don't because they may have to spend an entire day diagnosing a single, complex, fault."

So far as diagnostics are concerned, the 18 technicians at Spriggs rely heavily on all-makes tools and data sourced from independent supplier Texa.

In addition the firm has become an authorised repairer for Mercedes-Benz, Fuso and Isuzu trucks so it can easily obtain the necessary diagnostics tools and information for all three makes. It also makes use of the Mercedes-Benz apprenticeship scheme.

### Access is tricky

Commercial vehicle manufacturers are obliged to make service and repair information available to third-party repairers although it can sometimes be a little tricky to access. Technicians can go to their training courses, too, but there is a charge and then there's the question of lost hours of work while in attendance.

Returning to diagnostics, the only areas on a truck that you cannot fully access if you are not a franchised dealer are those involving safety and security, Reeves observes. "You can't do anything major to the ABS or ESP."

Workshop loading is planned up to three months ahead, with MOT test dates and statutory inspections all factored in.

Occasionally prospective customers will say they do not want Spriggs & Sons Commercials to handle their service and repair work because they view the Arthur Spriggs & Sons transport fleet as a competitor. It is rarely an issue, however, says Reeves, and the Spriggs vehicles are not prioritised over third parties. "They have to take their turn," he observes. "No one gets bumped."

Clancy Docwra also does almost all its own maintenance, according to transport manager John Blakeley.

Located at Harefield, Middlesex (its head office), Dartford in Kent, Sunderland and Livingston in West Lothian, the construction company's in-house workshops look after 135 trucks and more than 800 vans. The former are all Ivecos, the latter all Fords, and standardising on just the two clearly makes servicing a lot easier.

"We do servicing in-house so we can monitor the quality of the work closely and make sure we comply with everything the DVSA requires," says Blakeley.

Plans for the near future include bringing in the Freight Transport Association (FTA) to audit workshop activities and getting all drivers to report defects using an app on their smartphones during daily walk-around checks.

Clancy Docwra's vehicles and construction plant are maintained separately. "However, we have a team of 30 mobile technicians who can work on



## Insight: Workshops



both and deal with faults when vehicles are away from base," he says.

Both Spriggs and Clancy Docwra are firm believers in irtec accreditation for their technicians. "It's something the DVSA looks for so we went for it in 2016," Blakeley observes.

Established by the IRTE (Institute of Road Transport Engineers) professional sector of the SOE (Society of Operations Engineers), irtec is a renewable, voluntary accreditation scheme that assesses the competence and safety of technicians who maintain and repair commercial vehicles.

Once an irtec licence is issued the technician is listed on a national register and bound by a code of conduct. The licence is valid for five years and the technician must be reassessed in order to renew it.

The reassuring presence of irtec technicians is likely to make third parties more willing to subcontract maintenance to the workshop concerned; always assuming, of course, the price is right. They may be even happier to do so if it has undergone IRTE workshop accreditation.

Lasting for three years, such accreditation involves a day-long audit by FTA inspectors who examine everything from staff training records to equipment calibration certificates.

An approach some operators have pursued is to ask a franchised dealer to run their in-house workshop on their behalf while keeping a keen eye on the standards the dealer's technicians are achieving.

### No regrets

With 62 trucks, all of which are Mercedes-Benz, Somerset transport company Massey Wilcox embarked on such an arrangement back in the 1990s, says managing director, Robert Wilcox. He has never regretted it.

The Chilcompton, Radstock, company's workshop is rented by Mercedes-Benz dealership Rygor. Wilcox commits to buying new Mercedes-Benz trucks with repair and maintenance contracts and Rygor technicians service and repair them on site. They look after the fleet's older Mercedes-Benz too – "we keep our trucks for seven years from new," says Wilcox – and Rygor it allowed to take on third-party work as part of the deal.

It means Wilcox does not need to worry about recruiting technicians, paying them, getting them trained or investing in the equipment they need. Nor does he need to concern himself with the legislation governing workshop operations.

He has the assurance that his trucks are serviced by Mercedes-Benz-trained technicians who fit genuine Mercedes-Benz parts. "Rygor keeps a big stock of spares on site and I'm hoping it will install an ATF eventually," he says.

Wilcox doubts he is paying any more to keep his fleet on the road than rival hauliers who run their own workshops, and enjoys peace-of-mind into the bargain.

One potential drawback is that it would be difficult to switch from the Mercedes-Benz should Wilcox have a mind to. He doesn't; he's more than satisfied with the trucks he runs.

With 6,500 vehicles on its books, Salford Van Hire runs its own workshops at its sites in Manchester and Leeds. It does so to ensure quality standards are maintained and to keep



Having two ATF (authorised testing facility) lanes on site is helping Spriggs & Sons Commercials achieve its MOT passes

*"We do servicing in-house so we can monitor the quality of the work closely and make sure we comply with everything the DVSA requires"*

*John Blakeley, Clancy Docwra*



Genuine parts are ensured by Massey Wilcox's hook-up with a Mercedes-Benz dealer that runs its on-site workshop



*"In our experience there are plenty of technicians out there, but quality can be a problem"*

Nick Evers, Salford Van Hire

costs under control, says operations director Nick Evers.

"If you want a dealer to come out and re-set a truck's ignition switch then it will cost you at least £175 and some dealers will charge you as much as £250," he points out. "Your own technicians can do the job and save you money."

They can also react promptly when an amber warning light illuminates on the dashboard. All that may be required to clear the fault is for a technician to plug in his or her laptop.

"Some of the work, including diagnostics work, is still put out to dealers but we send guys out to audit their activities," he continues. "On one occasion a dealer technician had signed off a body as okay when there was a severe crack in it." The matter was immediately drawn to the dealer's attention.

"Even when maintenance is outsourced, we still like to look at the vehicles ourselves when MOT test time comes round," Evers says.

### Third parties for brake testing

Clancy Docwra takes the same approach. Most fleets with in-house workshops need to sub-contract some tasks from time to time. "Although we've got three roller brake testers of our own plus Tapley meters we sometimes go to third parties for brake testing," says Blakeley.

Over the years manufacturers have from time to time supplied trucks with a two-year repair and maintenance package as part of the deal, with dealer workshops handling the work. Sounds like an attractive offer. Unfortunately it does not always work out that way, according to Evers.

"The difficulty is the dealer may be tempted to do the minimum amount of work required to comply with the agreement," he says. "What you then find when the agreement expires is that items such as gear linkages, kingpins and shackles are noticeably worn and will soon need replacing."

When they are changed, the operator will get a bill from the dealership.

Fortunately Salford can use its buying power to obtain competitive workshop rates. "We enjoy a good relationship with manufacturers and their dealers," says Evers.

"Trucks do not cost as much money to maintain as they used to but, when things do go wrong, they cost you big style," he adds. "AdBlue systems, for example, are not fool-proof and can be expensive to put right."

Salford pays its technicians a slightly better hourly rate than local franchised dealers and there is scope to earn more by working extra hours and shifts.

"In our experience there are plenty of technicians out there, but quality can be a problem," Evers says.

Salford runs its own apprenticeship scheme and retains six or seven of the 10 apprentices it puts through a four-year cycle. Those that leave often want to return.

Run a large in-house service and repair operation and you will need the right software package to manage it. A good example is Key2 from Jaama.

Web-based, it can be used to manage drivers and vehicles and is available with a workshop management module. Its touchscreen functionality does away with manual input and makes it easier to book in jobs, load the workshop and keep control of work-in-progress.

That has been the experience of Perth and Kinross Council which has saved 1.5 employees by deploying it.

"Detailed management reports enable staff to view each

vehicle's history at the touch of a button," says fleet manager Bill Morton. "That not only provides a complete audit trail but gives us a focus on whole-life cost control enabling vehicle replacement cycles to be more tightly managed."

The council uses Key2 to manage 90 vehicles covered by O-licence obligations as well as 330 light commercials and 120 cars across 14 sites. It allows Perth and Kinross to schedule six-weekly statutory inspections of trucks along with servicing and MOTs for all of its vehicles and to ensure compliance with LOLER (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations), so far as tail-lifts and other handling aids are concerned.

Nearby Stirling Council and Falkirk Council have also introduced Key2 following Perth and Kinross's lead.

Jaama is by no means the only supplier of workshop management packages, with R2C Online making progress in the sector with its R2C Online service network platform.

Users include Cumbria-based Tyson H Burrridge which runs 36 trucks. It maintains them itself and also looks after vehicles belonging to third parties.

"About 70% of what we do is for third parties and we wanted something that would improve productivity and efficiency while creating tangible benefits that we could pass on to our customers," says director Neil Robinson.

The R2C Online solution sees the company's nine-strong team of technicians complete inspections using a touch-screen computer. The on-screen inspection sheet covers all legally-required service items and Tyson H Burrridge can add other items as and when required.

An inspection is not completed until it has been authorised by the shift foreman. Once that happens it is immediately uploaded to the online system and third-party clients are told that this has happened by email. They can then log in and view the completed sheet which is filed in a digital archive.

"Our technicians are completing inspections quicker than they did with our previous paper-based set-up," says Robinson. "The system has completely removed the need to file hard-copy inspection sheets which has massively reduced administration time and printing costs."

### Manage daily checks

Other R2C Online users include Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire-based Mick George, which runs some 260 trucks. It has used R2C Online to enable it to move away from the paper-based approach it used to rely on to manage maintenance and the daily checks completed by drivers.

"Not only did that mean an unsustainable amount of time spent on administration but it opened the doors to spotting errors such as incorrectly-completed inspection sheets and missing documentation," says transport manager Joe Gossage. "The time we've saved is now being spent on a more proactive approach to fleet maintenance."

Another supplier of management packages is Freeway Fleet Systems. Fleets with workshops that handle both internal and external work can hold all the details of third-party vehicles as well as details of their own with Freeway.

The package automatically emails customers to remind them when their vehicles are due for a statutory inspection or routine maintenance.

Once the job is finished it produces an invoice using information from the job card and automatically updates the accounting software. There is no need for manual data input.

While having suitable management software is vital, even more vital is machinery, which does not come cheap.

A roller brake tester alone can set you back up to £30,000. Invest in an ATF lane and you could be looking at an invoice for well in excess of £100,000.

It can be a valuable tool to attract third-party work but you are still reliant on the DVSA providing a tester; and some ATF operators say so many ATFs have now been appointed that making money out of one can be a challenge.



Online

To find out how other fleets function, visit [commercialfleet.org/case-studies](http://commercialfleet.org/case-studies)

# Used van values remain high in December

**A**verage LCV values remained strong at BCA in December as continued demand from professional buyers saw the headline value reach a record level of £6,396.

This was despite the shorter trading period and a relative dearth of good quality stock as many vendors held vehicles for the New Year.

Average LCV values were up by £586 (10.0%), year-on-year.

## Fleet and lease

The fleet and lease light commercial vehicle sector saw average values fall back marginally after three consecutive record months.

Values averaged £7,174 in December – a fall of £27 but still the third highest on record.

Retained value against MRP (Manufacturer Recommended Price) fell slightly to 36.34%.

Year-on-year, values were up by a significant £673 (10.3%), with average age falling and mileage declining significantly when compared to the same period in 2015.



Average van values were up 10% year-on-year

## Part-exchange

Average part-exchange light commercial vehicle values fell by £101 (2.4%) to reach £3,995 in December.

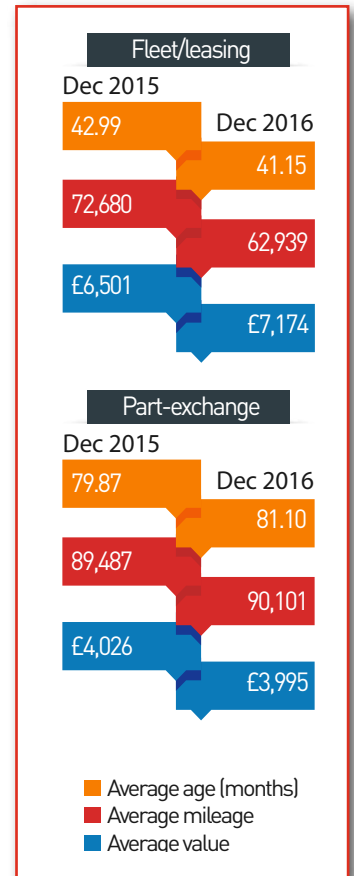
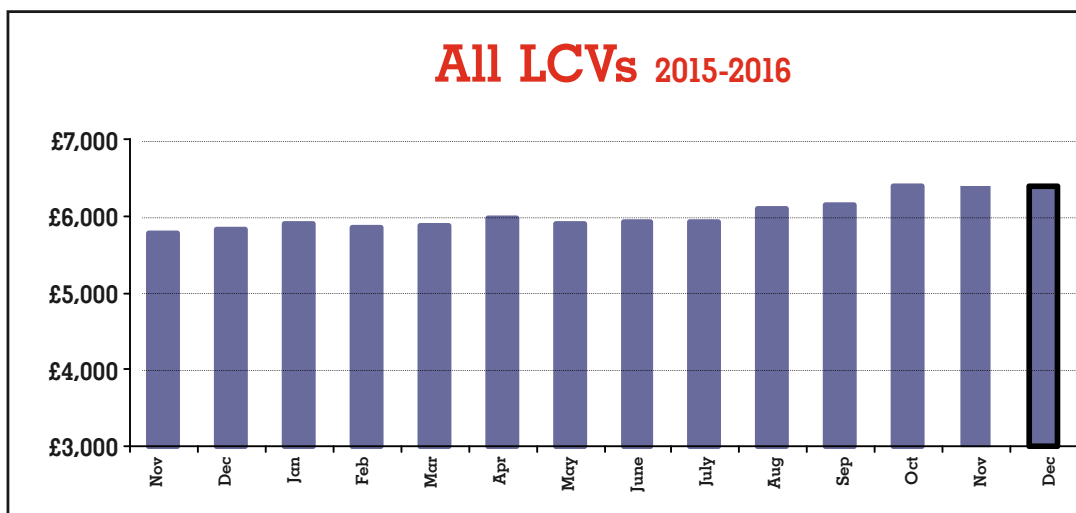
Year-on-year values were down by £31 as comparative age and mileage figures continued to rise.

## Nearly-new

Nearly-new light commercial

vehicle values fell back from the record levels reached in November, averaging £14,683 in December.

As always, this has to be taken in the context of the very low volumes reaching the market and the model mix factor, as well as the continuing availability of 'new shape' models reaching the used market.



# DOUBLE DIGIT VALUE INCREASES COMPLETE A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Signs are that the new year sales have returned strongly following the traditional festive lull



Quality stock was in even higher demand at BCA as some vendors held back awaiting the new year upturn

By Trevor Gehlckent

Despite the traditional Christmas downturn in the used van market, prices held up well last year, with Manheim seeing a year-on-year rise of 15.7% in average van values and BCA recording a year-on-year rise of 10% to £6,396 as demand continued unabated among professional buyers.

The rise – another record for BCA – was even more remarkable bearing in mind that there was a relative dearth of good quality stock as many vendors held vehicles back.

BCA LCV operations director, Duncan Ward, commented: “December is a short trading month and many corporate vendors hold vehicles back for the new year, making stock scarce and focusing buyer demand.”

“There was plenty of interest for any vehicles with a retail type specification, an unusual configuration or special equipment and, as always, any vehicle suitable for the delivery or courier markets was sought after. However, any vehicle in poor condition struggled to get the buyers’ attention unless it was keenly valued.”

“Early signs are the market has returned strongly in January, with good attendance at sales since the turn of the year and plenty of activity from online bidders. Typically January sees an uplift in demand and time will tell if 2017 will follow the pattern seen in previous years.”

At Manheim, in addition to the 15.7% year-on-year rise in average van values in December to £5,401, conversion rates were up by 4.2% compared to the same month in 2015, with buyers out in force and vendors selling right up until Christmas Eve.

Matthew Davock, head of LCV at Manheim, said: “We have

## 15.7%

year-on-year rise in average van values seen at Manheim

witnessed one of the strongest quarters on record for commercial vehicles and this encouraged vendors to continue selling until very late in the month, when they have previously held on to stock.”

Average age and mileage of vans sold fell both month-on-month and year-on-year, dropping by three months and 1,277 miles (16.8%) from November to 62 months and 74,656 miles.

Davock continued: “We saw younger stock enter the marketplace in December and this had a very positive impact on our average selling price and, more importantly, fuelled the appetite among buyers to continue to buy stock in what is usually a softer purchasing month.”

As a whole, the final quarter of 2016 saw an increase of 20% in year-on-year volumes, with slightly lower average age and mileage, but an uplift of £471 in average selling price – all on the back of record performance in 2015. The CV market continues to go from strength to strength and Manheim smashed virtually every previous record in 2016.

Online performance at Manheim continues to grow, with 34% of vans sold in December going to internet buyers, which was 10% higher than December 2015 and 2% above the figure record in November. For 2016 as a whole, Manheim’s online CV sales were 8% up on the previous year.

Davock added: “We have seen an increase of 28% in buyers choosing to purchase online.”

Meanwhile, the impact of the annual festive slowdown in the used LCV marketplace has been minimal at Shoreham Vehicle Auctions throughout December, with local and national buyers looking towards new stock in January.



# Reducing Mercedes Sprinter Downtime



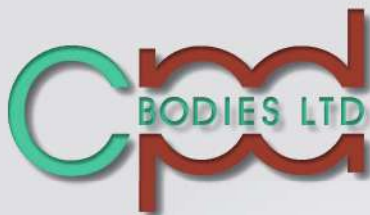
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## Insight: Remarketing



With vendors holding stock back over Christmas to take advantage of a healthy market in the new year, buyers were keen to snap up plenty of good quality used stock. Potential buyers also registered interest in certain makes and models due to be introduced in strong numbers this year, reflecting the strong demand from SMEs on the auction floor at Shoreham, ahead of the January return to work.

The remainder of the Lancing-based auction house's January and February used LCV sales programme is already looking promising, with a wide variety of specialist vehicles and equipment – including an always popular Mercedes-Benz Unimog – already attracting interest.

Such is the demand in the used marketplace, the influx of duplicated stock in January is expected to be well received from buyers if priced accordingly.

"Year after year, the traditional used LCV market slowdown over Christmas tends to have less impact on demand for good quality stock at Shoreham, with buyers already queueing up to take advantage of what's on offer in January," said Tim Spencer, commercial vehicle sales manager at Shoreham Vehicle Auctions.

"As a result, we expect used values to quickly return to normal by the second week of the new year, despite an increase in stock levels expected to come into the market."

At Cap Red Book, editor Ken Brown continued that prices held fast over the Christmas period, with overall performance across all sectors averaging at around 97.8%, much the same as November. Looking at vehicles in white only, the overall average sales performance improved slightly at 98.41% not taking into account condition.

Brown said: "Surprisingly, from a supply perspective, analysis of the sale catalogues revealed that auction entries were only marginally down month-on-month. The average age of vehicles remained the same at 63 months and the average recorded mileage decreased slightly from 76,041 miles to 75,559. Auction re-entries were up slightly from 26.63% to 27.45%."

"With month-to-date sales conversion rates obviously down considerably and with fewer auction sales for traders to attend during December, all the indications were that there would be plenty of stock around in January which shouldn't be too much of a problem for vendors if the year starts the same as we've been seeing in recent years, so we are expecting supply to quickly level out."

## What the experts say

*"We have seen an increase of 20% in buyers choosing to purchase online"*

Matthew Davock,  
Manheim

*"Buyers are already queueing up to take advantage of what's on offer in January"*

Tim Spencer,  
Shoreham Vehicle  
Auctions

*"The indications were that there would be plenty of stock around in January which shouldn't be too much of a problem"*

Ken Brown, Cap Red Book

# 63

average age in months of  
vehicles entering catalogues  
(Cap)

# 75,559

average recorded mileage of  
the vehicles offered for sale  
(Cap)

Online

For the latest news on  
the remarketing sector,  
visit [commercialfleet.org/remarketing](http://commercialfleet.org/remarketing)

## THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS



**Andy Picton, Senior  
Commercial Vehicle  
Editor, Glass's**

During 2016, an unbelievable 375,687 new light commercials were registered in the UK. This is an all-time record and marks the fourth year of consecutive growth. On the back of some impressive new launches, pick-ups were a resounding success during the year with nearly 50,000 units registered – an increase of 17.6% on 2015. Large vans over 2.5 tonnes made up 62% of all sales during the year, up 4.8% on 2015.

*"This increased volume (in the new market) has got to start coming back to the used market soon"*

With the market slowly getting back on track as January progresses, there is little reason to think the used market will fall apart during the first few months of the year. Pick-ups generally continue to perform strongly during these winter months and stock sporting the right pedigree of condition, miles, colour and history are also having little difficulty in finding new homes.

The potential dark cloud on the horizon is that following four years of continued strength in the new market, this increased volume has got to start coming back to the used market soon.

Leasing companies have hinted to this effect and, as always, supply and demand will dictate the market value and the prices paid going forward.

The used buyer will continue to demand higher specification models where possible and as such expect strong prices to be paid when the 'right stock' becomes available. However, anything sub-standard or appearing in large volumes will be affected with values coming under downward pressure as the year moves on.

# What is Fleets Informed?

The *Commercial Fleet* Fleets Informed programme is designed to deliver comprehensive advice and knowledge to fleet decision-makers on a range of key topics to assist them with the efficient and effective running of their vehicles.

The programme, which will run throughout 2017, extends across print, website and events with three commercial partners supplying their thoughts, tips and observations.

Each partner will give insight into the major areas of fleet operations to provide new ideas, possible solutions to long-standing problems and spark some alternative thinking.



# FLEETS INFORMED

Brought to you by **CommercialFleet**

#### Important dates to watch out for include:

**March:** Special section in *Commercial Fleet* where the Fleets Informed partners showcase their company and why they are best placed to represent their category as a thought leader.

**May:** Interview in *Commercial Fleet* with each partner on how fleets can reduce cost and improve efficiency savings in their particular category.

**July:** Case studies with fleets focusing on the Fleets Informed topics will share best practice and outline what fleet decision-makers can expect if they choose to do business with one of the Fleets Informed partners.

**September:** Fleets Informed partners will be showcased as part of the *Fleet News* preview on the UK's biggest fleet decision-maker event, Fleet Management Live.

## The partners

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# ELECTRIC VANS, SPECIAL EDITION AND NEW TAXI

## Renault Kangoo ZE

One of the reasons electric van sales have not taken off so far is that their range is limited to less than 100 miles.

Renault claims to have solved this problem in the Kangoo ZE electric van by introducing a new battery which extends the range of the vehicle in real-world terms to 168 miles. The new vehicle will go on sale in the UK in mid-2017.

Renault has also revealed that it will be producing an electric version of the Master panel van, which is due to go on sale at the end of 2017.



## Volkswagen Caddy

Volkswagen has launched a new Caddy Black Edition, with just 500 of the special models being made.

Exterior highlights include deep back pearl-effect paint, black roof rails, body-coloured bumpers, door mirrors and handles, front foglights with cornering lights, lowered suspension (by 27 mm) and sporty 17-inch Canyon two-tone black and silver alloy wheels.

Inside, the Caddy Black Edition features full carpeting, leather multi-function steering wheel, gearknob and gaiter, climatic air conditioning and heated windscreen. The standard equipment list also includes cruise control, DAB+ radio and Driver Alert System.

The new model is equipped with a 2.0-litre TDI 102PS Euro 6 engine and a five-speed manual transmission. Features include start/stop, hill hold assist, regenerative braking and low rolling resistance tyres. As a result, the Caddy Black Edition returns 60.1 mpg on the combined cycle and has CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 123g/km.



## Mercedes-Benz Vito taxi

Mercedes-Benz has launched a new version of its Vito taxi. The model was first launched in 2008 to challenge the traditional London black cab.

Vito Taxi offers space for up to six passengers, as well as being fully-wheelchair accessible. Available initially in 'National' specification, fleets can choose from the front wheel-drive 109CDI model, with an 88PS Euro 6 engine, or the 114CDI with a 114PS Euro 6 engine, which drives the rear wheels. Both come with manual gearboxes (optional seven-speed automatic gearbox is available for the 114CDI models) and in compact or long body lengths.

Later, a 'London' specification version will be available, incorporating the rear steering axle that allows it to meet the 25ft turning circle rule as prescribed by the Public Carriage Office so it can execute a U-turn in London's congested streets.

The London variant is offered with the more powerful engine as standard, together with the 7G-Tronic seven-speed automatic gearbox, which is now controlled using a steering column-mounted lever.

## Ford Transit Custom plug-in

Ford is planning to launch a plug-in hybrid version of the Transit Custom in Europe by 2019. The new model will be one of a seven-vehicle electric programme that includes an all-electric SUV and an F150 pickup truck hybrid.

The move is part of a \$4.5 billion (£3.7bn) investment in electrified vehicles by 2020, offering customers greater fuel efficiency, capability and power across Ford's global vehicle line-up. The plans are part of the company's expansion to be an auto and a mobility company, including leading in electrified and autonomous vehicles and providing new mobility solutions.

Mark Fields, Ford president and CEO, said: "As more and more consumers around the world become interested in electric vehicles, Ford is committed to being a leader in providing consumers with a broad range of electrified vehicles, services and solutions that make people's lives better."

"Our investments and expanding line-up reflect our view that global offerings of electrified vehicles will exceed gasoline-powered vehicles within the next 15 years."



ON SALE: END OF THE YEAR

## RENAULT MASTER ZE

New 3.5-tonne van aims to be future-proof against emissions legislation introduced by Governments and major cities

### NEED TO KNOW

- Electric motor can reach a top speed of 71mph
- Battery has a range of 124 miles when the van is empty
- Wall box charge takes six hours (two fewer than before)

By Liam Campbell

Less than six months after Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles unveiled the eCrafter, Renault has also taken the plunge to enter the embryonic 3.5-tonne electric van market. The Master ZE (Zero Emission) complements the already successful Kangoo ZE to give Renault the most comprehensive electric LCV line-up in the UK.

In stark contrast to the blossoming small electric panel van market, the idea of electrifying large panel vans has been taken far less seriously by manufacturers, with Iveco's product director, Martin Flach, saying in a *Commercial Fleet* interview they "make no sense at present".

However, it seems manufacturers are reconsidering.

"We've been talking with some of the larger fleets that run the Kangoo ZE, like La Poste and EDF, and they've been extremely satisfied with it but expressed a desire for a greater payload and more load volume," explains Gilles Normand, senior vice-president of Renault Electric Vehicle Division.

"We are targeting the large municipalities and local authorities, and fleets that operate in the 'last mile' distribution sector. For us, the Master ZE brings together two of Renault's key strengths as we are the market leader for both commercial vehicles and electric vehicles in Europe."

Authorities around Europe are forever implementing new regulations relating to the emission standards of diesels, and Renault says the new Master ZE is 'future-proof' against any further reductions in permissible emissions levels.

Large electric vans make a lot of financial sense. Typically, a van of this size will achieve around 40mpg according to official NEDC figures, which will cost an operator around £2,730 (based on 20,000 miles a year and £1.19 per litre), while the Master ZE is expected to consume just £639 worth of electricity over the same distance (based on mains electricity charged at 12p per unit).

### New connectivity systems

Renault has packed its new electric van with a wide range of innovative features, to improve occupant comfort and safety, and to minimise downtime.

ZE Trip helps the driver to locate nearby charging points from the vehicle's R-Link navigation system, and also lists their availability and compatibility.

Complementing Trip, the ZE Pass allows the driver to access and pay for charging via a smartphone or tablet. ZE Pass shows the prices per unit of each of the charging points, so drivers know exactly how much it will cost, and then they can pay via the app or a RFID barcode.



### Load area and practicality

Renault is keen to stress that the Master ZE is not a version, but a complete range. There are two variants; a panel van, available in three wheelbases and two roof heights, and a chassis cab in long wheelbase form. There are load lengths of 2,583mm, 3,083mm and 3,373mm, load heights of 1,700 and 1,894mm, with a standard load width of 1,765mm (1,380mm between the wheelarches).

The Renault Master has the lightest chassis on the market which means, even with the added weight of the heavy battery and motor, there is still a payload of between 1,000kg and 1,100kg on the panel van, dependent on wheelbase and roof height.



Improvements to the chemistry of the battery cells have reduced charge times while still managing to improve the range



*“Larger fleets have expressed a desire for greater payload and more load volume”*

*Gilles Normand, Renault*

#### Electric motor and battery

Renault has created the Master ZE by reusing parts sourced from other vehicles within its ZE range. The R75 motor, for example, is inherited from the Zoe. It produces up to 76PS and 225Nm, and can reach a top speed of 71mph. As with most electric vehicles, the 225Nm of torque is available instantly, which means it will be quick off the mark – even with a full load on board. Combined with the gearless transmission, it is ideally suited for inner city courier work.

While the motor was developed and built in-house, Renault sought the expertise of LG Chem for the battery. Imported from Japan, the ZE33 battery (33kWh) has an impressive range of 124 miles when empty, according to NEDC figures, although it won't be until closer to release that Renault will be able to assess a fully laden range.

Charging times were a key focus during the development stage, as the wall box charge of the previous generation Kangoo ZE drew some criticism.

“The feedback from Kangoo ZE operators suggested that very few people were using the fast chargers, and that most were using the wall boxes overnight but were left frustrated by the length of time it took,” said Normand.

“By improving the chemistry of the battery cells, a wall box charge of the new battery takes six hours, which is two hours less than the previous battery that also had a much shorter range. This demonstrates how far we have come with regard to technology in such a short amount of time.”

#### Price and availability

The executives at Renault refused to give any figures, instead insisting that the new Renault Master ZE will be “affordable” and that it would have a “similar” percentage premium on the standard Master, as the Kangoo ZE has. This would mean that it would work out at about £30,000 plus VAT, before the PIVG (plug-in van grant of 20% up to a maximum of £8,000).

However, Renault expects that most operators will choose to rent the battery, instead of the full purchase. This reduces the list price by around £3,000 and the customer will not have to worry about the rapid devaluation of the battery or the heavy cost of replacement, although they will then have to pay between £35 and £70 every month for battery hire (dependent on annual mileage and the length of the contract).

The new vehicles are expected to arrive at dealerships by the end of the year. There are currently 60 Renault LCV specialist centres, called the Renault Pro+ network, around the UK, although there are plans to increase this by a further 20.

# Video 'witness' helps slash number of disputed claims

Challenges drop from 40% down to 2% where camera recordings exist

**S**martWitness recently monitored the impact of FNOL (first notification of loss) cameras in 3,000 commercial vehicles and noted that disputed claims had reduced by close to 40%.

The world-leading designer, manufacturer and supplier of in-vehicle camera systems found that around the same percentage – 40% – of all motor insurance claims are disputed when there is no video evidence.

This figure drops to around 2% when vehicles are fitted with FNOL cameras.

Major benefits included significant improvements in driver behaviour and a 19% reduction in the number of incidents which resulted in insurance claims.

The amount of time spent on the claims where the driver was at fault was significantly reduced which led to a huge reduction in legal costs.

## The connected camera solution

The SmartWitness KPI forward-facing camera was the central piece of hardware for the scheme and it fits neatly to the inside of the top of the windscreen.

SmartWitness CEO Paul Singh said: "We were the first company to provide an FNOL video solution for commercial fleets. With our system, fleet operators and insurers can have incident data within seconds. The KPI camera provides the highest quality footage and data which gives all the proof they need to fight any claims."



Incidents can be captured on video and made available "within seconds"

The KPI has a 170-degree high resolution camera, as well as G shock sensors which are alerted to any incident and immediately send video footage plus detailed incident data – speed and force of impact, location, date and time – to the fleet operator and/or insurer via the 3G/4G cellular network.

The KPI works alongside a business's current technology, delivering incident notification and video via email or directly into the fleet's tracking/telematics system.

## Lower costs and faster repairs

FNOL helps fleet operators and insurers to slash costs because they know exactly who is to blame for an incident seconds after it happens. It allows the parties to order repairs immediately, where appropriate, and limits added costs associated with any claim.

The FNOL video footage provides irrefutable witness evidence to help ensure claims are settled on a fair basis and root out fraud. The removal of any uncertainty allows fleet operators and insurers to

combat and avoid fraudulent claims. All parties – including the police if necessary – can then be alerted immediately.

The simplest way to weed out fraudulent claims is to stop them at source – by showing fraud has been caught on camera and any fraudulent claim is likely to result in police action. This would not be possible without the camera technology from the SmartWitness KPI.

## Taking back control

The fleet operator has full knowledge and control over the incident footage and data. All data and video is delivered directly via email or their tracking/telematics system so that they can track and monitor their vehicles while protecting their driver, vehicle, insurance premium and loss ratio. In the event of an incident fleet operators and/or their insurance claims team receive instantaneous alerts and have instant access to on-board footage in order to identify the responsible party and possible fraudsters.

MODEL: 5.5-TONNE 55S17W

## IVECO DAILY 4X4

Dogged and well powered off-roader is virtually in a class of its own in terms of capabilities and pricing

Basic price  
**£68,300**



Payload  
**2,985kg**



Fuel economy  
**18.8mpg**



CO<sub>2</sub> emissions  
**398g/km**



Iveco's Daily 4x4 met and overcame the ups and downs of our rugged test

### NEED TO KNOW

- Chassis cab or crew cab in 3.5 or 5.5-tonne versions
- 24 high- and low-ratio and crawler gears
- Ground clearance of 255mm when fully laden

By John Lewis

**P**ublic utility and construction company fleets have a need for an off-roader that will carry more than an all-wheel drive pick-up and can get to locations that a low-rise 4x4 van may struggle to reach. It is a niche that Iveco is busy filling with the recently-launched high-rise 4x4 version of the latest Daily.

On sale as a chassis cab and as a crew cab at either 3.5 or 5.5 tonnes, it comes with front and rear ground clearance of 255mm when fully-laden. Wading depth is 660mm.

Two floor-mounted levers allow you to engage the transfer box and give you access to 24 high- and low-ratio and crawler gears, with the first six high-ratio gears available for on-road driving. Centre, front and rear differential locks are included in the deal and the transfer box and gearbox offer a variety of different power take-off options.

Power comes courtesy of a Euro 6, AdBlue-dependent, 172PS 3.0-litre diesel with up to 400Nm of torque on tap. A reinforced chassis frame is fitted and a three-piece steel front bumper means that if just one of the sections is seriously damaged then there is no need to replace the lot.

Two wheelbases are available – 3,050mm or 3,400mm – but the crew cab is not marketed with the shorter one.

We tested a 3,050mm-wheelbase 5.5-tonne 55S17W single-cab fitted with a Scattolini dropside body containing a 1,000kg load over the highly demanding, four-wheel drive course at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire. Having used the transfer box lever and dropped down to a lower set of ratios, most of it was tackled in either 13th or 14th gear.

The off-roading Daily surged up steep, muddy ascents and down the subsequent descents without problems. Sandy

### SPEC

Gross vehicle weight (kg): 5,500

Power (PS/rpm): 172/3,000-3,500

Torque (Nm/rpm): 400/1,250-3,000

Payload (kg): 2,985

Comb fuel economy (mpg): 18.8

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): 398

Basic price (ex-VAT): £68,300

### KEY RIVAL

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 4x4  
5.0-tonne 519 BlueTEC

Gross vehicle weight (kg): 5,042

Power (PS/rpm): 192/3,800

Torque (Nm/rpm): 440/1,400-2,400

Payload (kg): 2,243

Comb fuel economy (mpg): 25.9

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (g/km): 284

Basic price (ex-VAT): £46,930



inclines and declines were shrugged off just as successfully as was a row of transverse concrete ridges.

A section of angled concrete tipped the Iveco at an angle of 25 degrees but it hung on doggedly. It forded a lake then went into a narrow concrete channel with water at the bottom and up the other side without a moment's hesitation.

A little more engine retardation would have been useful on one or two occasions but its absence failed to halt progress. The entire route was completed without the need to press the buttons on the dashboard to engage diff locks and the trip was performed on standard on/off-road tyres.

The only button that had to be pressed was the one that kills the engine fan to prevent it being damaged when going through deep water.

The 4x4's driving position is much higher than that of the standard Daily – a real boon when off-road – making it easier to spot potential obstacles to your progress and avoid them.

On ordinary roads, the Daily delivers a firm ride although the driver is insulated from the worst bumps and thumps by a mechanically-suspended seat. Throwing the Iveco hard into bends is inadvisable given its high centre of gravity.

All the torque on tap low-down and across a wide plateau means the Daily can shoulder heavy loads and lug them up a steep hill without breathing hard. It is also more than capable of hauling a braked trailer grossing at up to 3.5 tonnes.

The Daily has few, if any, direct rivals. Mercedes-Benz's iconic Unimog is more capable but is £15,000-£20,000 more expensive. Mercedes-Benz's 4x4 Sprinter and Ford's 4x4 Transit are less capable, but a lot cheaper.

### VERDICT

Iveco is to be congratulated for offering a highly-capable 4x4 truck that makes full use of the Daily parts bin to keep costs down, yet still manages to be almost unique. If you need to carry bulky pieces of equipment to places in the middle of nowhere this could be the vehicle you are looking for.



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Richard Green and Russell  
Sidebottom, Give the dog a bone



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MODEL: BLUEHDI 120 M S&S ENTERPRISE

## CITROËN DISPATCH

A couple of small gripes but, overall, the completely revamped Dispatch is creating a favourable impression

Price as tested  
**£25,398**



Payload  
**1,487kg**



Fuel economy  
**53.3mpg**



CO2 emissions  
**139g/km**



The Dispatch is classy and capable

### NEED TO KNOW

- Pull-down desk in the middle of the back seat
- 5.5 cubic metres of loadspace plus flap in the bulkhead
- Huge amount of torque on offer of 340Nm

By Trevor Gehlcken

**O**ur Citroën Dispatch long-termer has been with us for more than a month now – plenty of time for us to make a considered opinion about its merits or otherwise.

With almost every component new this van is a quantum leap forward over the old model, which was distinctly showing its age against the opposition after a 10-year run.

We are pretty impressed with what's on offer so far and although there are one or two gripes – which we will come to later – our overall impression is favourable.

For starters, the van looks classy and, once inside the cab, the seats – despite being a lot harder than we are used to from PSA – prove superbly comfortable and supportive on long journeys, with adjustment on the driver's side available in all directions.

There are two coffee cup holders just in the right place on top of the dash (an important point for a committed coff-oholic like me) and a pull-down desk in the back of the middle seat for laptop or iPad use while stationary, plus plenty of other cubby holes for various other items of detritus.

In the back, the van is liberally swathed with a plastic floor and side panels to keep it safe from those dreaded 'reverse dings' that can happen when cargo slides about and damages the vehicle from the inside out. They are virtually impossible to repair cheaply and can seriously affect the value of a van at selling time.

In medium wheelbase format there's a useful 5.3 cubic

### SPEC

Gross vehicle weight (kg): 3,100

Power (PS/rpm): 120/3,750

Torque (Nm/rpm): 340/1,750

Load volume (cu m): 5.3

Payload (kg): 1,487

Comb fuel economy (mpg): 53.3

Actual fuel economy (mpg): n/a

CO2 emissions (g/km): 139

Price as tested (ex-VAT): £25,398

Current mileage: 5,133

*"The Citroën will use 211 fewer gallons of fuel over a 100,000 mile lifecycle – a massive saving of £1,102"*

metres of loadspace and our van has as standard a flap in the bulkhead so extra long items up to three-and-a-half metres can be accommodated – not bad for a vehicle of this size.

Once fired up, this van takes the medium sector prize for a smooth, quiet driving experience. In our book it even beats the legendary Volkswagen Transporter in this area – and the VeeDub has just won the *Commercial Fleet Van of the Year* title, so that's some praise indeed.

Handling is crisp and sharp and our test van feels like a right flyer, although only a relatively modest 120PS is on tap. The secret, we believe, is the huge amount of torque on offer – 340Nm, which is way above the 249Nm from our recent Transporter long-termer.

And talking of the Transporter, our old long-termer managed an official 47.9mpg on the combined cycle compared to an astonishing 53.3mpg for the Dispatch. That means the Citroën will 'officially' use 211 fewer gallons of fuel over a 100,000 mile lifecycle – a massive saving of £1,102 at today's pump prices.

Over the coming weeks we will be testing these claims in real-world driving conditions.

As stated earlier, there are a few gripes. We were sorry to see that the free Teletrac sat-nav and stolen tracking system in the old Dispatch has been deleted, leaving our test van only with a DAB radio and USB port – not even a CD slot. Mind you we understand there may be some developments regarding the Teletrac system although Citroën has not revealed what.

And as there isn't a built-in sat-nav unit now, we would also like to see a 12-volt take-off on top of the dash to save the wires of my TomTom unit trailing all over the dashboard.

Our only other moan is that the plastic floor in the cargo area isn't the non-slip variety (as was in the Transporter).

So anything placed in the back and not securely tied down will slide all over the floor when accelerating, braking or going round a bend. The lesson here is to follow best practice and secure all loads no matter how small and light.

MODEL: 8X4

# VOLVO FMX

Reputation enhanced as latest generation of multi-axle trucks does not disappoint

## NEED TO KNOW

- Up to 11 chassis lengths available
- 12 speed I-Shift automated gearbox
- Range of axles includes 4x2, 8x4 and 10x6

By Tim Campbell

Over the past couple of decades Volvo Trucks has been building an enviable reputation in the construction sector by launching a series of targeted rigid and multi-axle trucks with a high level of specification suitable for the task at hand.

Under the FMX banner, Volvo Trucks shows off its latest generation of multi-axles, although the range isn't restricted to just multi-axles. It continues the theme by utilising the latest in on-board technology; one such instance is on the all-wheel drive models.

According to the manufacturer when operating an all-wheel drive truck in a desert test, it showed the front-wheel drive could be disengaged up to a staggering 95% of the time which may surprise many off-road operators.

Using this information Volvo Trucks developed the Automatic Traction Control which automatically disengages the front axle when it's not needed and, more importantly from a cost perspective, can reduce the fuel consumption by up to 2%, dependent on the driving cycle.

It's this clever use of combining existing chassis technology with the latest electronics that helps chip away at the total life costs of running a truck combined with making it safer to operate as well as easier to drive. A great example of this is the Dynamic Steering system which was highlighted by a great video where a hamster (yes – hamster!) drives an eight-wheeler out of a Spanish quarry with a little help from a carrot.

The system links the standard steering gear setup with an electric motor which is controlled, 2,000 times per second, via the truck's electronic control units and produces torque overlay. This torque is progressive and gives more power to the steering when needed, handy for vehicle operating off-road and even when the road has a perceivable bank in it.

So this clever use of electronics, which is by no means

unique to Volvo Trucks, is really at the centre of the technological revolution which we are all experiencing, and when I recently drove a fully equipped FMX along the Warwickshire countryside and, more interestingly, urban area it showed the beneficial impact on everyday driving.

Although in the UK we generally relate the FMX to multi-axles, the full range runs all the way from 4x2 to 10x6 rigid and tractors/prime movers up to 8x4, although in most cases three and four axles are the most common on our roads.

The FMX utilises the power from two, six cylinder Volvo Group engines mainly the 11.0- and 13.0-litre units with horsepower ranging from 330PS to 540PS. The 11.0-litre goes up to 450PS with the 13.0-litre starting at 420PS. All deliver their maximum power at 1,800rpm.

Of course, power is nothing without the backup of torque, and the 11.0-litre ranges from 1600Nm to 2150Nm up to 1400rpm, the 13.0-litre starts at 2100Nm and reaches 2600Nm at a maximum 1400-1450rpm.

With multi-axle work, quite often power take-off ratings are of interest and both engines have a rating of 650Nm but the larger 13.0-litre scores a little higher with an ability to go up to 1000Nm available for driving and static use.

The Euro 6-level engines rely on the use of both Exhaust Gas Circulation (EGR) and Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) as well as a Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF), so it's no wonder unladen weights are creeping up on modern trucks although manufacturers do undertake weight reduction programmes to help reduce their impact.

Behind the engines are Volvo's own 12-speed I-Shift auto-

*"A hamster drives an eight-wheeler out of a Spanish quarry with a little help from a carrot (in a video)"*



Our 8x4 test vehicle offered very easy access for such a high chassis



Price as tested **£154,225** £

Payload **18,600kg** kg

Warranty **2 years** ☂

**95%**  
of the time the front-wheel drive could be disengaged in a desert test

**2,000**  
times a second the electric motor is controlled



Elements of the Swedish flag cleverly form the X of FMX on this distinctive cab colouring

mated gearbox, and here's where technology also has an impact as operators can specify a series of five different 'driving style / truck mission' software packages. The engine comes with the basic package but there's also distribution, construction, long-haul and heavy duty options.

With such a wide range of axle configurations and up to 11 chassis lengths there's definitely going to be a model to suit your operation, especially when you combine these with the availability of parabolic, air and multi-leaf suspension systems.

One of the area's Volvo is famous for is its height ride chassis, and the FMX is typical of the type with four chassis heights ranging from 90mm to 1,240mm.

Braking starts with the engines as both feature with-exhaust braking and engine braking starting at 160KW on the 11.0-litre rising to an impressive 375KW on the 13.0-litre with retarder. Further braking is provided by what have become standard requirements such as ABS, EBD and EBA.

There are four basic cab alternatives Day, Sleeper, Globetrotter and Crew supported by dampers all round or air-suspension with automatic self-levelling control. There are two trim levels, standard and comfort, for the seating on the passengers as well as the drivers although both have head restraints.

This is mixed with two trim levels, called Driving and the higher level Driving +, with features such as remote central locking, electronic climate control, a second bunk, Bluetooth and USB connection.

It's fair to say our test vehicle was a 'Christmas tree' as far as specification was concerned, with most of the optional packages ranging from Drive +, Living, Audio Advance and

## SPEC

**Price as tested:** £154,225

**Gross vehicle weight (kg):** 32,000

**Engine capacity (cc):** 13,000

**Output (PS):** 547

**Torque (Nm):** 2,600

**Payload (kg):** 18,600

**Warranty:** Two years

## KEY RIVAL

**DAF CF 510**

**Gross vehicle weight (kg):** 32,000

**Engine capacity (cc):** 12,900

**Output (PS):** 517

**Torque (Nm):** 2,500

**Payload (kg):** 22,212

**Warranty:** Two years vehicle; three years for driveline

Active Safety + and these are mixed with ESP, Forward Collision Warning, Lane-Keeping Support, Lane Change Support and Driver Alert Support.

It's not often I comment on the livery of a demonstration truck but this Volvo FMX stands out from the crowd in blue and yellow (Swedish flag) and I have to say I love it but, there again, I am colour blind!

Getting into the Globetrotter cabbed 8x4 High B ride chassis you are immediately struck by the ease of access for such a high chassis, and the air suspended driver seat provides great support in the right place.

Switching on the 540PS engine is a surprise as the cab noise levels are very low so you have to look down at the rev counter to ensure it switched on.

Once the I-Shift is engaged and we are moving, the noise levels are just as low. The technology, such as lane change support, gives an air of confidence to your driving and is really useful.

The parabolic-sprung suspension operating on both axles provide a great driving experience helped in no small manner by a fully loaded truck, and the 540PS engine managed this with ease. The I-Shift seamlessly switched between the gears often block changing especially on acceleration.

## VERDICT

As mentioned in the introduction, Volvo has built up a good reputation in the building sector and the FMX continues this tradition.

# Inside the March issue

**Fleet profile:** McFarlane Telfer

**Manufacturer spotlight:** Iveco

**Insight:** Rental – from short-term to long-term, flexi deals

**Feature:** CV show preview and Brussels motor show review

**Vehicle tests:** Mitsubishi L200, Iveco 18-tonner curtain side

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March 1 2017  
Villa Park, Birmingham

March 23 2017  
Twickenham Stadium, London

March 29 2017  
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**Commercial Vehicle Show**  
NEC, Birmingham

May 11 2017  
**Policy priorities for the freight transport sector: regional strategies, international trade and the workforce shortfall**  
Central London

September 20-21 2017  
**The Emergency Services Show**  
Hall 5, NEC, Birmingham

## Contact us

Fleet News, Media House, Lynch Wood,  
Peterborough PE2 6EA  
Email – [fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:fleetnews@bauermedia.co.uk)

### Editorial

#### Editor-in-chief

Stephen Briers 01733 468024  
[stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:stephen.briers@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### Deputy editor

Sarah Tooze 01733 468901  
[sarah.tooze@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:sarah.tooze@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### News editor

Gareth Roberts 01733 468314  
[gareth.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:gareth.roberts@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### Features editor

Andrew Ryan 01733 468308  
[andrew.ryan@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:andrew.ryan@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### Web producer

Christopher Smith 01733 468655  
[christopher.smith@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:christopher.smith@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### Staff writer

Matt de Prez 01733 468277  
[matt.deprez@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:matt.deprez@bauermedia.co.uk)

#### Associate editor

Trevor Gehlcken

#### Photos

Chris Lowndes

#### Production

##### Head of publishing

Luke Neal 01733 468262

##### Production editors

David Buckley 01733 468310

Finbarr O'Reilly 01733 468267

##### Designer

Erika Small 01733 468312

#### Advertising

##### Commercial director

Carlota Hudgell 01733 366466

##### B2B commercial manager

Sheryl Graham 01733 366467

##### Account directors

Sean Hamill 01733 366472

Lucy Herbert 01733 366469

Lisa Turner 01733 366471

Stuart Wakeling 01733 366470

##### Account manager

Karl Houghton 01733 366309

##### Head of project management

Leanne Patterson 01733 468332

##### Project managers

Lucy Peacock 01733 468327

Kerry Unwin 01733 468578

Katie Lightfoot 01733 468338

##### Telesales/recruitment

b2brecruitment@bauermedia.co.uk

01733 468275/01733 468328

#### Events

##### Event director

Chris Lester

##### Event manager

Sandra Evitt 01733 468123

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Kate Howard 01733 468146

##### Event administrator

Paige Phillips 01733 395133

#### Publishing

##### Managing director

Tim Lucas 01733 468340

##### Group marketing manager

Bev Mason 01733 468295

##### Office manager

Jane Hill 01733 468319

##### Group managing director

Rob Munro-Hall

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Paul Keenan

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**Adam Hills**  
Comedian

Our comedian for 2017, Adam Hills, is one of Australia's most talented comedians. His upbeat, energetic comedy and rampant spontaneity have won rave reviews and universal acclaim - including three Perrier nominations.

Whether he's comparing the merits of his Aussie countrymen with Brits and Yanks or showing off his artificial limb, Adam's positive take on life is a refreshing alternative to the cynical comics who dominate the circuit. Already a TV regular in his native land, Adam is now the host of Channel 4's comedy show The Last Leg.

Don't miss out, book your table now by calling Paige Phillips on 01733 395133 or email [paige.phillips@bauermedia.co.uk](mailto:paige.phillips@bauermedia.co.uk)

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