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Accelerate your transition to zero emission transport

By: Kim Harrison, Senior Category Lead, CCS Fleet team at Crown Commercial Service

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Essential Fleet Manager - Issue 7 (2022)


Welcome to issue 7 (2022) of Essential Fleet Manager Magazine, published for fleet professionals who work for organisations that operate within the Essential Services Sector.

The magazine is available as a 'free' digital edition or can be delivered in 'printed format' for a paid subscription. If you would like to feature your fleet operations in a future issue of Essential Fleet Manager - get in touch, we would love to work with you on highlighting your achievements.

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Regards, Debbie Cheadle - Editor



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Accelerating the Transition to Zero Emission Transport

By: Kim Harrison, Senior Category Lead, CCS Fleet team
at Crown Commercial Service

This last year disrupted the UK public sector and its supply chains. That uncertainty is likely to continue as the world grapples with the crisis caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, our recovery from a global pandemic and the impacts of climate change.

Challenging market conditions

The automotive industry continues to experience challenging conditions affecting vehicle availability. A recent poll suggests that 94.4% of responders experienced delays ordering new cars and vans. Initial causes included a shortage of semiconductors and other materials used in vehicle production and supply chain disruption due to COVID-19.

In 2020, global vehicle production shrank by nearly 16% compared to 2019. Although 2021 saw year-on-year growth of 3% (around 80 million vehicles), signalling recovery, escalating energy prices have exacerbated the market.

Additional market factors disrupting the automotive parts market include the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The semiconductor supply issue will likely continue into 2023, which will adversely affect the automotive industry. It's predicted that semiconductor supply in the automotive industry may not stabilise until 2024.

Consequently, after 2 years of low production rates, these converging challenges have created a considerable backlog in demand for new cars with extensive delivery timescales. However, on the bright side, there is healthy availability for some brands and models, such as ultra low emission vehicles.

Greener transport is key to achieving net zero goals

The stakes are high, and the opportunity is huge for transport and fleet operators to make a difference in the UK's transition to net zero emissions. The Government

Fleet Commitment sets out to electrify at least 25% of government car fleets by the end of 2022 and 100% of cars and vans by 2027.

Despite economic and geo-political unrest, we've seen a rise in public sector bodies using procurement to move to carbon net zero solutions.

During 2020/21, ultra low emission vehicles accounted for 39% of all new vehicles procured by the public or third sector through our agreements. That number rose to 48% in 2021/22 and is already tracking at 51% for 2022/23.

Pure electric, zero emission vehicles represented 24% of all new vehicle registrations in 2020/21, which contributed to an increase to 30% in 2021/22. That upward trend is continuing in 2022/23 and is currently tracking at a 37% increase.

Making procurement a force for good

The UK public sector spends around £300bn every year on public procurement. Getting the best from your procurement spend allows you to maximise every pound, save time and redirect precious resources where they're needed most. Procurement can be a force for economic, social, and environmental good when it's used to increase your buying power.

In 2021/22, Crown Commercial Service (CCS), the UK's largest public procurement organisation, handled more than £27bn of public sector procurement. At CCS, we are working to ensure our agreements and the products and services within them continue to support the Government's ambition to reach net zero by 2050.

But we know staying on track for net zero amid crisis, conflict, and change can be challenging.

Using traffic management to create clean air zones

We are helping local authorities develop and implement clean air zones in cities.

Our Traffic Management Technology solution uses the latest technology to check that high-polluting vehicles entering clean air zones are identified and charged. Bristol City Council used one of our traffic management technology agreements to support the development of its Clean Air Zone, set to launch in November 2022.

Ensuring total fleet needs are met

Our Fleet agreements provide access to electric vehicles and supporting charging infrastructure, enabling you to implement a scalable solution to suit your requirements. We also offer fleet management and staff salary sacrifice schemes.

When East Devon District Council converted their streetscene fleet to electric Light Commercial Vehicles, our agreements helped them to install a scalable charging infrastructure equipped with real-time charging data to maximise charging time. Additionally, using 2 depots meant the fleet could quickly return for overnight charging, ensuring these low-carbon vehicles had enough power to cover the local authority area.

A broader view to alleviate disruption

To help counter the effect of disruptive market conditions, consider taking a broader approach to net zero. Lowering carbon emissions involves more than your operational fleet or public transport services. The bigger picture includes:

- business travel on the road, rail and air
- staff commuting
- the wider supply chain of couriers and logistics
- the provision of goods and services
- the choice of energy used for your charging infrastructure

By taking stock of your end-to-end transport operations, you can accelerate your transition to zero emissions by leveraging the different components of your transportation supply chain.

A simple 3-step cycle of continuous improvement

Getting started on a continuous cycle of improvement is easier than you think. Here are 3 simple steps to follow in a repeating loop.

Step 1: Start with the data

The first step is to know your data and impact, which helps establish your baseline. Do you have a good understanding of how your fleet and transport services are currently used?

Build in multiple layers of data

You can build this picture from various data sources from vehicle telematics and travel

management software to inform you of journey types, frequency and mileage. Add intelligence from your contracts, including service, maintenance and repair impact on vehicles. You also need to understand driver, employee and public transport user behaviours that will affect fuel consumption and emissions.

Include external data sources

Don't forget to factor in data held elsewhere. One example might be the use of hired vehicles and instances where employees use their own cars, referred to as grey fleet. Remember to build in the business cost all those mileage and subsistence claims too.

Step 2: Know your demand and scope

The second step is to understand your demand and scope to plan accordingly. Of course, your first consideration should always be how to reduce the need to travel altogether. Most organisations use a blend of fleet and pool vehicles, hired vehicles, and grey fleet for operations and those essential journeys.

Counter negative impact with proactive action

Your grey fleet is an area that can inflate your organisation's carbon footprint as the average car on UK roads is 8 years old and likely to be powered by petrol or diesel. To counter the impact, you can introduce a salary sacrifice scheme to support staff in acquiring new, more cost-efficient, low-

emission vehicles.

Factor in vehicle charging infrastructure from the start

Factoring in and planning for your vehicle charging infrastructure before placing orders for your new electric vehicles is critical.

Home-based charging can be relatively easy to implement and even form part of the vehicle lease contracts. Work-based charging can be more challenging and costly. Explore options such as using public charging infrastructure or implementing revenue-generating charging infrastructure.

Consider the impact of logistics and supply chains

Your strategy to reduce carbon from your

transport services extends beyond your hired vehicles to include your logistics services and supply chain. For courier and logistics use, consider the following:

- which methods carry a higher emissions ticket
- do your contracts consider lighter, less wasteful deliveries
- are your suppliers tracking their data and developing a carbon reduction plan

For your bought-in goods and services, you can incorporate consolidation measures, seeking the optimum ways your supplies can be maintained through working with your suppliers.

Step 3: Think holistically, implement incrementally

The third step is to make the changes and achieve great things. Once you've set your strategy, you can begin to implement changes. To ensure you bring your operations, staff and service users along for the journey with you, share your ambitions and listen to their feedback.

Plan for change

Change is constant, so plan to be agile.

Innovations will emerge, and economic, market and environmental conditions will fluctuate. New vehicle models and transport technologies are introduced at a rapid pace. So don't assume you won't need to revisit your strategy periodically.

Monitor, measure, and optimise

Measure your progress with the data you started with at the beginning of the 3-step

cycle. Then, as you progress, measure the impact the changes are having on your organisation's carbon emissions.

Capture the data from internal and external sources that impact your organisation's footprint to help you determine in what areas you are achieving your goals and where you need to make adjustments.

CCS can help accelerate your net zero transition

CCS offers 36 commercial solutions (procurement frameworks) in areas that will be key to accelerating the transition to net zero. Our sustainability team can provide guidance, solutions, and services that support your transition to net zero.

Solutions being used to decarbonise the public sector include:

- low emission vehicles
- greener energy solutions, including

- heat pumps and solar panels
- construction projects using low carbon materials
- refurbishment and maintenance of buildings
- energy efficient cloud storage
- removing and reducing single-use plastics from public sector supply chains

CCS supports your end-to-end net zero journey

We have many solutions that can help you with decarbonisation across your procurement portfolio, from the obvious

areas, such as energy and total fleet solutions, to places you might not even consider, such as technology hardware and food and catering.

We believe your buying decisions have the power to create a greener world. Our Carbon Net Zero Cityscape interactive guide can help identify ways to reduce your organisation's carbon footprint and navigate your way to Carbon Net Zero.

Our new carbon net zero grants and funding page makes it easier to find the funding you need to operationalise net zero plans.

To find out more visit

www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/travel-and-transport

CARBON NET ZERO 

Charging Infrastructure

By: Simon King

Partner | edenseven Ltd



edenseven
Enabling sustainable growth

So the time has come. You have realised, or maybe been told, that you have to transition your fleet to electric. The first reaction is probably one of either dismay or panic. After all, running diesel fleets was relatively simple. You could focus on the vehicles, put a fuel card solution in place and then spend time on improving safety, ensuring legal compliance, meeting operational needs and managing costs.

Now the need to electrify. All the safety, compliance and operational requirements remain the same but you have to also contend with range anxiety, the need for charging points and a significant number of ambivalent or even downright resistant drivers.

Therefore an understandable initial reaction given the challenge, but one that with some planning and expertise can be transformed into an opportunity to make a meaningful difference to your people, the business's profit and our planet.

First things first. Electric Vehicles are much better for the environment and they also save fleets, and any employees who have private use, a significant amount of money. So, plenty to be upbeat about.

Now let's consider where to start.

I would suggest the priority for any business embarking on fleet electrification is to first establish and agree with all key stakeholders your 'Why'. As in "Why are we doing this?". If senior leaders in the business and across functions such as property, facilities, HR, finance and procurement are aligned with the reason for making the transition the move is far more likely to be a success. There are a whole range of excellent reasons including "it's the

right thing to do as we must all reduce our emissions", "employees will save money and it supports them in a cost-of-living crisis", "it will improve our business's sustainability credentials improving sales" and "it will reduce our costs" or indeed some combination of all of these and plenty more other great benefits. But if the wider team and senior leaders are not onboard then the challenge gets much harder. If you need support to get the whole stakeholder group behind you don't be afraid to bring in people who've been there before. It's that important.

The next area is to identify which vehicles can be transitioned most easily. These will broadly have two key characteristics; firstly, they will not be doing more mileage on most days than their electric range and secondly, they can be charged where they sleep, in other words where they are parked when off shift.

To establish the range point telematics is ideal, although a mileage log can be used where this doesn't exist. You can either analyse the telematics in house using something like Excel, bring in a consultant to do this for you or use one of the solutions which are now coming to market which will do all the analysis for you categorising your vehicles, identifying suitable replacements and establishing where you need charging infrastructure. I would recommend using 70% of the WLTP range of vans as the real-world range and 90% of cars. Vans tend to see harsher driving and heavier loads hence the difference. Any vehicle which has less than 3 days a month where it goes over this real-world range is an easy one to switch as operational impact and need to charge on route will be minimal.

The second aspect of where they can charge needs a little more effort. Again,

packages which analyse your telematics data to provide insight are a good idea, but even these will need to be combined with some driver surveys for home-based vehicles. So, asking drivers whether they can charge at home will be an important early step or for depot-based vehicles establishing what electrical capacity is available at those locations. Those vehicles which can either be charged at home or at a depot with available capacity, and that meet the range point previously mentioned are the ones to prioritise. These will be the easiest and get the best reception from drivers which will lead to positive feedback and make the rest of the transition easier when you get there. The worst thing that could happen is starting with real hard to switch vehicles, that have an impact on your operation or drivers and leading to serious push-back on the whole program.

Alongside establishing which vehicles you can transition you also need to consider infrastructure and driver awareness. These two elements will actually be far more important than vehicles in making the program a success. I have found 60% of the challenge is infrastructure, 30% driver awareness and only 10% vehicles.

On Infrastructure you want to go for a high quality, reliable solution which ideally has a fully integrated back-office solution. This back-office solution will cover elements like payment solutions for home, work and public, the ability to manage the amount of energy chargers draw especially in settings with multiple chargers to avoid capacity issues and to flex time of charge to manage cost as well as providing excellent reporting capability. Whilst it might be tempting to go for the cheapest charger you can find in the long term this is a false economy as

all of the software and integration is what actually delivers the value to a fleet.

An infrastructure provider who can deliver all of these points will also be a valuable partner in establishing what charging infrastructure you need where. This is typically based on the use case of your vehicles combined with the vehicle energy efficiency and dwell time at key locations. If you don't know where your vehicles have dwell time or for how long then telematics analysis solutions or consultancy might again be valuable to support this.

Driver awareness, from CEO to shop floor, is crucial. Myths about electric vehicles abound, with everything from

"they are worse for the environment", to *"they cost loads more to operate"* and even *"you can't charge them in the rain!"*. A series of *"How To"* guides, along with education sessions, whether run in person or as webinars is an absolute minimum. In the absence of facts rumour will abound, so communicate, communicate, communicate.

An analogy I often use on transitioning a fleet to electric is buying a jigsaw puzzle. The picture on the front looks beautiful but when you take the lid off it's a mess and a challenge. Especially if you aren't sure whether all the pieces are there or in the absence of a sound strategy. Therefore, laying out the program, considering all of the

elements across vehicles, infrastructure and driver awareness is critical. Think of every question you would ask if you were switching to electric and ask lots of your colleagues too; then make sure your plan answers all of these in a simple and operationally acceptable way. If it all feels too much or you want to access the savings and benefits more quickly then don't be afraid to ask for help. There are people who have been there and done it, just make sure you see their battle scars before bringing them onboard!

Most of all remember that however hard it may seem you are helping save the planet for your children and grandchildren with every vehicle you switch, so enjoy the successes.



Picture for illustration purposes only.

About Simon King

Simon is a Partner at edenseven, a sustainability consultancy focused on solutions which deliver business performance. He is an experienced Sustainability and Green Fleet senior leader, most recently he repositioned the UK's leading Facilities Management company as an ESG high-performer. This included launching Plan Zero, a commitment to net zero by 2025 of which a 35% carbon reduction in the first two years has already been achieved, primarily through the rollout of the largest pure electric fleet in the UK with over 2,200 electric vehicles on the road. As a result, Simon was included in Top 10 most influential people in Green Fleet 2022, the highest ranked fleet leader in the list.

Simon led all aspects of Mitie's fleet electrification from business case, board sign off, vehicle assessment, infrastructure requirements, solution development and driver awareness & behaviour. He also worked with senior clients to explain how fleet electrification could be part of their own journey to net zero. Overall Plan Zero has saved over 350,000 tonnes of carbon for clients.

Previously Simon was a Global Chief Procurement Officer, having worked for Tata Group (TGB), Coca-Cola and Dairy Crest. He lives in the New Forest on the south coast of the UK with his wife. He has two adult children, a Cocker Spaniel called Teddy, and is a keen sailor.

For more information visit: www.edenseven.co.uk



In the spotlight

Mission Zero

A new standard

With Nick Caesari, CEO, Mission Zero



It is now more important than ever that fleet operators commit to reaching challenging standards in sustainability, safety, and compliance. Reaching and surpassing these standards must be managed, rewarded and of course, accredited and this is where Mission Zero fits in. Essential Fleet Manager sat down with Nick Caesari, CEO at Mission Zero Group, about the new wide reaching quality standard for road transport and how it paves the way for operators towards a safer and more compliant future.

Q: How would you briefly summarise the overall objective of Mission Zero?

The objective of Mission Zero is to support the fleet operators in raising fleet standards, improving road safety and reducing emissions, as well as reducing their costs. It has been developed by operators for operators, so we understand the challenges operators face, especially in today's more challenging climate.

At Mission Zero, we believe that fleet accreditation should not be expensive or overly challenging for fleet operators but support them in helping de-risk their operation, as well as helping them win more contracts. By providing zero or low subscription fees, highly competitive auditing fees, all the documentation that an operator needs free of charge, as well as subsidised training, fleet accreditation is now accessible to all fleet operators, irrespective of size.

Q: How does Mission Zero differ from existing accreditations?

Mission Zero is there to simplify accreditation and help fleet operators meet both legal compliance and procurement requirements within a single audit, without the need to join multiple accreditation schemes.

The foundation of Mission Zero is a full legal compliance audit, coupled with best practice such as protecting Vulnerable Road Users. Mission Zero is also the first accreditation scheme to be officially accredited by Transport for London as equivalent to FORS Silver, so by including Mission Zero+ Work-Related Road Risk Module as part of their audit, fleet operators are compliant with TfL's Work-Related Road Risk (WRRR) requirements. It is also recognised by CLOCS and can

be used to demonstrate compliance with the fleet operator requirements of the CLOCS Standard. This is great news for the industry, as this is the first-time fleet operators have had a choice in meeting procurement requirements.

Q: What does Mission Zero accreditation tell customers and the wider public about fleet operators?

Firstly, that they have had their operation independently audited through a deep dive assessment of their operation, to ensure that they are a legally compliant operator. We appreciate that a lot of operators believe that they are meeting all their legal obligations however when you're focused on running a business, it is easy for things to fall between the gaps. We have a gap analysis methodology to our auditing so we are there to identify risks in the fleet operation so operators can quickly address issues and protect their business, their employees and the general public.

With regards to specifiers (procurement) it provides them the reassurance that they are awarding contracts to best-in-class operators and it helps to simplify their assessment criteria.

Q: Mission Zero has five Key Management Areas. What are these and does this comprehensive approach mean that it may become the industry benchmark standard?

Principally, the five key areas are what you would expect from any credible and recognised accreditation scheme. They cover 1. Managing the Operation through policies & procedures; 2. Managing Drivers Hours including tachographs, Working Time Directive (WTD); 3. Managing Staff including licence checks, medical fitness

and CPD training; 4. Managing Vehicles including roadworthiness, servicing and load security; 5. Managing the Journey including safe & efficient routing, quiet deliveries and specialist operations.

However it is the auditing methodology, as well the evidence base that is the key differentiator and sets the benchmark. We undertake a deep-dive on the vehicle and drivers records to identify historical trends on risks such as driver defect reporting and preventative maintenance inspections (PMI's). Our auditors are also not conducting a 'tick box' exercise and must use the application of common sense when auditing our clients and are encouraged to have an open dialogue with the customer throughout the audit process.

Q: Can you explain the difference between the two different levels of accreditation?

The Mission Zero Standard covers full legal compliance and best practice. It is a fleet operators annual health check against their legal obligations but goes further by helping mitigate risks in their operation with regards to protecting vulnerable road users and environmental standards.

Mission Zero+ are additional requirements that are specified by procurers such as Transport for London or CLOCS. These modified or additional requirements are specified to meet contractual obligations but are only required if an operator is working under one of these contracts.

Q: Which parts of Mission Zero help to improve environmental standards?

Throughout the Mission Zero Standard there are various elements that contribute

to improving environmental standards but we are the first to admit, that all available accreditation standards in the market today (including ours) are weighted heavily towards safety and do not go far enough with regards to improving environmental performance.

In response to this, Mission Zero is currently developing a Sustainability Module that is aligned to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) but translated into a simplified set of measures that are realistic for fleet operators to implement. When it comes to sustainability, contrary to popular belief, it is not just about buying electric vehicles, it is far wider than that.


Q: What is your overall vision for helping operators on the way to greater compliance, safety and sustainability standards? What is actually achievable?

If you were to combine the number of fleet operators that are accredited under one of the current schemes, the market penetration of those schemes is still very small in comparison to the number of fleet operators in the industry. Through our engagement with industry, we know that those operators that are not accredited either do not see or understand the value of accreditation to their business, perceive schemes as "money making" or "cash-cows" or, that schemes set too higher expectations on the operator, or move the goals constantly.

We have always said that a fleet standard are just words on paper unless you have engaged with the industry, understand their challenges and make it realistic for them to achieve. If you don't, fleet operators will either not engage or they find a way to circumnavigate the requirements, which defeats the whole purpose of a standard in the first place.

When we developed Mission Zero, we did so from the operators perspective. We have listened to operators concerns and challenges, addressing as many as possible without compromising the integrity and quality of the Mission Zero standard. Our Governance Board is mainly made up of fleet operators and they are responsible for determining changes to the Mission Zero Standard, as well the use of our operating profit surpluses. As we say "We run Mission Zero, but the operators control Mission Zero".

We hope that we have gone a long way to try and change the transport industry's perception of fleet accreditation schemes and the value that they can bring to an operators business.



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Green Issues are Changing Grey Fleet Management, Says AFP

Environmental issues are beginning to quite radically change approaches to grey fleet management, the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP) says.

Speakers on its Grey Fleet Management webinar, held recently, reported that there was increasing pressure from boardrooms to look at all vehicles being used on business from a sustainability point of view.

AFP chair Paul Hollick explains that the message coming from senior management can perhaps be summarised

as, "What is the point of making our core fleet zero emissions through electrification if our grey fleet lags miles behind?" and it's a good question.

"The answer is quite complex. Yes, employers can probably start to insist that cash takers move over a period of time towards electric vehicles (EVs) because they have chosen to forego a greener company car. However, more casual grey fleet drivers – those who use their vehicles for limited miles on business – cannot be approached in the same way.

"There are several potential answers for this group. Salary sacrifice schemes that promote EVs are one although these are currently being hampered by poor supply, high rental rates and rising interest. Zero emissions pool fleets and rental vehicles are other possibilities, although again the latter is being frequently restricted by poor availability. Which option is best for your fleet will depend very much upon individual circumstances."

Paul said that much of the current boardroom interest in zero emissions vehicles came from Scope 3 emissions and a general interest in promoting an image

of sustainability.

"One of the interesting aspects of the current mood is that the way in which the environmental aspects of grey fleet appears to have really registered with many directors. We're not sure why this is but it could simply be that when you walk across the company car park, the green divide between a new EV and an eight year old diesel car – both used for business – is all too apparent."

The AFP webinar covered many key aspects of grey fleet management including the experiences of major operators, the need for a clear and robust policy that enforces minimum standards, the necessity to record driver and vehicle documentation, and the requirement to undertake driver risk assessments and training.

Paul said: "We are seeing a general increase in interest in grey fleet management from our members and this webinar was well-attended with more than 100 delegates registered. It's an area that we plan to spend more time supporting with AFP events and resources in the future."



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Fleet are being urged to challenge limitations on their transition to EVs, as grid capacity threatens to slow down decarbonisation



EV charging infrastructure specialist Mer says that many fleet operators are surprised by how little spare capacity is available from their local grid, forcing them to re-evaluate their electrification strategies.

"Fleet operators are leading the way in the transition to EVs," said Simon Tate, Sales Director at Mer UK. "However, their plans are increasingly being frustrated by the available energy at each depot. Many older sites were simply not designed and built with the grid infrastructure needed to support a substantial number of EVs. The infrastructure is improving but it's not there yet."

"This was not a problem in the early stages of electrification, when perhaps only a handful of EV charging points were

required at each workplace. However, the next phase of mass adoption is really testing grid capacity, and too often it is found wanting. These problems can be overcome, but you need the right mix of solutions to do so. It is therefore really important for every fleet manager to understand what energy is available on site and how to optimise it, in order to make truly informed decisions on your EV roll-out."

Mer provides site surveys to identify energy capacity and is also expert in finding ways to get around limitations, through its load balancing technology. Load balancing is when a network of charging points shares available power to ensure all vehicles can still be charged, albeit at slower rates. It is a far more cost-effective option than paying

for a grid infrastructure upgrade.

Site surveys, grid capacity and load balancing are all covered in a new free publication, the Complete Fleet Manager's Guide to Electrification. Created by Mer to help fleet managers better understand how to electrify their fleets, it also includes information on how to procure the right chargers for each site, how to bring home charging into the mix, and how to efficiently manage a charging network.

"Fleet managers are not energy experts and they shouldn't have to be," added Simon. "However, it's vital that they get their EV infrastructure right first time. Working with an expert partner like Mer can ensure that grid constraints don't act as a speed bump as fleets accelerate the transition to EVs."

To download a free copy of the Complete Fleet Manager's Guide to Electrification, visit <https://uk.mer.eco/fleet/>



MOT cost cutting – a dangerous move for motorists

Bi-annual MOT proposal will not alleviate the rising cost of car ownership, says Intelligent Motoring, as delaying repairs will double already rapidly rising costs

As a new RAC survey rears fresh consumer concerns about Government's plans to change the compulsory MOT from every year to every two years, Intelligent Motoring highlights the rising cost of vehicle repairs and says that short-term financial gains from delaying an MOT by twelve months will have long term financial implications, as well as significant road-safety consequences.

Data analysis from Intelligent Motoring, the parent company of MotorEasy, Motokiki and Warranty Assist, reveals the cost of vehicle repairs has risen on average by 33% January-June 2022, compared to the same period in 2021. These costs are expected to continue to rise.

Duncan McClure Fisher comments, "With the cost-of-living crisis hitting households hard across the UK, the industry and Government has a duty to responsibly support consumers in managing their finances during these difficult times. Delaying repairs to vehicles for short-term financial gain is not an answer.

"Our analysis of service, repair and maintenance claims confirms that the costs

are rising and this is likely to continue. A small fault today already costs a third more to rectify than it did this time last year. Leave this small fault to develop another 18-24 months and the cost implications could be significant, let alone the safety risk it could pose to the driver, their passengers and other road users.

We must not forget that the UK has one of the best road safety records in the world and this is due in no small part to our current MOT system."

The findings of the RAC survey back Intelligent Motoring's sentiment. Over half (58%) say the changes could end up costing drivers more in the long run due to problems or defects going undetected and becoming more costly to repair, while 44% believe it might cause garages to put prices up for other repairs to compensate for lost earnings from doing less MOT work.

Previous research carried out by Intelligent Motoring revealed that UK motorists could save around £2billion every year simply by making sure they get their MOT test done at the same time as their annual vehicle service. Analysis of around 5,000 MOTs and

services every month showed that 80% of faults found in service procedures would be flagged in the MOT test anyway.

SMMT Comment:

"The industry shares the widespread concern over rising prices and the squeeze on household incomes. Safety, however, must always come first and, whilst today's vehicles are more reliable than ever, regular MOTs ensure safety-critical components such as brakes and tyres which wear out as a function of as a result of normal operation, are properly inspected and maintained.

Stretching MOT intervals will undermine the safety net at a time when vehicle miles driven are increasing. To ensure the safety of our roads, drivers, passengers, pedestrians and other road users inspections and maintenance must be carried out annually following their first presentation in year three.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive

Wiltshire Council invests in 17 new hybrid electric vehicles to cut emissions and save money

Wiltshire Council has invested £600,000 in 17 new, mid-sized hybrid vans to reduce carbon emissions and saving around 80% on fuel costs.

The 17 LEVC VN5 vans will be used by the council's parking, pest control and highways services, and will run for up to 70 miles on a single plug-in charge. As they are hybrid vehicles, they can also be run on standard fuel, but as these teams usually make short journeys, the majority of trips will be fully charged through the council's charging infrastructure, which is currently being upgraded in its hubs and car parks.

These new vehicles fit with the council's business plan objectives to reduce carbon emissions and modernise its fleet to low carbon vehicles.

Cllr Dr Mark McClelland, Cabinet Member

for Transport, said: "This is our first rollout of hybrid vehicles as part of our Fleet Strategy, and it will enable us to reduce our carbon emissions and save money over the next five years."

"The vans will run for 70 miles on a single charge, and they do have the option to use petrol if required - though of course, for both environmental and cost reasons, we want to keep this to a minimum."

"The vehicles will save us 80% on the fuel costs of the previous vans, and also save an estimated 140g of carbon dioxide each kilometre when using the electric charge. All of our electricity at the council comes from renewable sources, making those kilometres truly low carbon."

"The hybrid vehicles are the first phase of our plan to have a complete fleet of low carbon vehicles. For the next step, the replacement

of all EV chargers in Wiltshire Council car parks will begin in the autumn. We will also be leasing more fully electric cars and vans in the coming months."

"These 17 vehicles will be the first of many as we seek to make the council carbon neutral by 2030."

Simon Barr of ALD Automotive, said:

"We've been delighted to have been able to work with Wiltshire Council in funding the first of their petrol hybrid vans as they start their transition to a cleaner fleet."

"ALD Automotive's aim is to work with our Public Sector customers to operate cleaner, more cost-effective fleets and Wiltshire Council have now taken some great first steps to ensure their fleet is fully electrified by 2030. We look forward to working with them on further carbon reduction projects for their fleet."

Charging ahead with new EV vehicles for Cheltenham

Cheltenham will soon see its first two electric vehicles on the road and saves 9.455 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) since May, supporting its goal of becoming a net zero borough by 2030.

Two new electric vehicles will be on Cheltenham roads this week after joining the council-owned vehicle fleet at Ubico Ltd, the council's environmental services partner.

The vehicles are both Toyota Proace City and will not generate any CO2 emissions. They will be used by the grounds maintenance team and the facilities cleaning team helping to further support the Council's target of becoming a net carbon zero council and town by 2030.

Focus on reducing CO2 emissions continues to be a priority for the council



and its partner Ubico. Since May this year, when different technology was introduced for the heavy goods vehicles to be driven in the most efficient way, the teams have reduced CO2 emissions by 9.455 tonnes. This is the equivalent of 156 tree seedlings grown for 10 years, capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide.

Work will continue with the Council's partner Ubico to support carbon reduction in the rest of its diesel fuelled fleet.

Councillor Iain Dobie, member for waste,

recycling and street services said: "I am really proud of our Ubico drivers and their support in reducing carbon emissions by this much in such a short space of time. I hope residents and businesses in Cheltenham will follow our example and think about alternative fuels for their vehicles to reduce carbon emissions too."

The Council is working towards replacing all vehicles in its fleet under 3.5 tonnes with electric as they become due for renewal and also the introduction of alternative fuels for the heavy goods vehicles on the fleet operated by Ubico.



Lex Autolease kickstarts Springfield Properties' electrification journey

Lex Autolease has supported The Springfield Group, one of Scotland's leading housebuilders, to launch a new purely-EV company car scheme, as part of wider plans to transition its full fleet to electric.

The UK's largest fleet management business partnered with Glassgreen Hire, a subsidiary Plant and Transport business of the Springfield Group. The EV offering was rolled out to the Group's 235 eligible employees in September 2021 and has already seen industry-leading levels of take up, with 135 orders placed, and more than half already delivered. Popular models among employees include the Mercedes EQA and EQC, BMW iX3, Volkswagen ID.3 and Peugeot e-208.

Moving towards an EV fleet will allow The Springfield Group to cut emissions by an estimated 5.2tonnes of Co2 for every vehicle replaced. It will also enable the business, which previously only offered car allowances, to reduce costs across its fleet.

To encourage uptake and support charging across Scotland, The Group has installed banks of electric vehicle charge points at its offices in Elgin and Larbert near Falkirk and Dawn Homes office in

Glasgow, with further points planned for its Tulloch Homes office in Inverness. It is also investing in temporary mobile charging points, which are available to employees at major construction sites.

The move forms part of the housebuilder's long-term plans to reduce the emissions of its entire fleet to zero, under which it is already running a fully electric van with two further nine-seater EVs on order. To support this, specialist commercial vehicle fleet engineers at Lex Autolease will continue work with Glassgreen Hire, providing expert consultancy to The Group on its net zero journey.

Shona Murray, Corporate Relationship Manager at Lex Autolease, said: *"Springfield's EV-only car scheme is a major success story. From Board level to site managers and office staff, it is clear that everyone across the business is invested in helping reduce its environmental impact, and this has been reflected in the impressive uptake figures, with almost half of all eligible employees choosing to switch to electric. "It is fantastic that Springfield is helping to strengthen the UK's charging infrastructure, as well educating colleagues on how to affordably access charging in their own*

homes. I hope that this will drive long term sustainable behaviour change and encourage more people to make the switch in future."

The Group also provided employees with guidance on accessing the Government's Electric Vehicle Homecharge Scheme, which has now been replaced by the EV ChargePoint grant, to help fund the installation of a charger at their home.

Innes Smith, Chief Executive for The Springfield Group, said: *"We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint, which means looking carefully at everything from the way we build our homes to the makeup of our fleet, to identify where we can operate more sustainably. With developments across Scotland, our employees are regularly travelling to our sites, so making the switch to electric company cars is a great step towards reducing our carbon emissions.*

"Working in partnership with Glassgreen Hire and Lex Autolease has enabled us to make our sustainability ambitions a reality. I hope that our success can show the appetite for EVs among colleagues and help set a positive example at a pivotal time for sustainability in the construction industry."

Warwickshire County Council - reducing emissions from transport

Warwickshire County Council has reduced emissions from its fleet of vehicles and is investing in an electric vehicle future.

The Council operates a mixed fleet of 700 vehicles which includes, Fire Appliances, specialist transport buses, Gritters, staff pool cars and a variety of service-specific support vehicles.

In relation to their recent 'Great Big Green Week' campaign running across local communities the subject of transport was discussed.

In 2014/15, carbon emissions from Warwickshire's fleet of vehicles were 1,396 tonnes of CO₂, in 2019/20, this had dropped to 1181 tonnes of CO₂. This drop in emissions is accounted for by some key initiatives.

The environmentally conscious purchasing of vehicles

When vehicles in the Warwickshire fleet are replaced, the Council will always strive to purchase low emission (Euro 6 standard) replacements. This happened recently with the purchase of 10 new specialist transport buses.

In addition to their excellent emissions rating, the buses are each fitted with their own solar panel array and battery storage, which allows ancillary services (such as aircon) to be powered by a renewable source, which dramatically reduces fuel consumption.

While the Council's fleet of older buses delivers around 8 miles per gallon (mpg), the newest additions to the fleet will comfortably deliver close to 30mpg for a similar journey.

The Council's commitment is to explore more sustainable vehicles where possible for its fleet, however it is currently felt the range per charge on larger electric vehicles is not yet suitable for their use in a rural County such as Warwickshire. Whenever new vehicles are purchased, the Council will always assess all the options – Electric, Hydrogen Cells etc – as technology is improving and range increasing all the time.

A different type of public transport

Warwickshire County Council has for

some time been funding what is known as demand-responsive transport in Atherstone, Colehill and Rugby through the innovative Indiego Service, operated by Stagecoach.

Demand responsive transport is exactly as it sounds – instead of having buses running set times and locations irrespective of local need, Indiego responds to the public transport needs of residents in those areas, even providing a door-to-door service for residents with mobility issues.

The vehicles used for the indiego service are low emission rated and the nature of demand responsive transport, inevitably, reduces emissions when compared to traditional public transport.

Looking to the future

Looking ahead, Warwickshire County Council will continue to work towards reducing the emissions of its fleet of vehicles and over the coming years:

Warwickshire's Fire and Rescue Service – who already operate a number of electric vehicles – will be exploring the possibility of using bio-ethanol in their fire appliances to further reduce harmful emissions and improve air quality; and The Council will be supporting the roll-out of Electric Coventry, which

will see electric buses completing journeys between the city and parts of Warwickshire.

Electric vehicle (EV) charging

In addition to getting, its own house in order in relation to vehicle emissions, Warwickshire County Council is committed to improving electric vehicle charging infrastructure around the County to enable residents to make the switch to EVs.

Over the last 18 months, the Council has been successful in submitting bids to secure grants and investment to help improve EV charging availability in Warwickshire.

As a result of securing this funding, it has been able to deliver 170 7kw charge points, across 26 charging hubs located in a mixture of locations across Warwickshire.

The combined public and private charge point installations have had a significant positive impact. Warwickshire's position compared to the English average has moved from below to above the England average over the period 2020-2022 with an average of 51.6 charging devices per 100,000 people in population across the County.

"From choosing new vehicles that are rated for their low emissions to demand-responsive public transport and exploring the use of electric vehicles whilst providing the infrastructure for our residents to do the same, we are very proud of the efforts that have been made to reduce the emissions from our fleet.

"We appreciate that electric vehicles might not be for all our residents, but there are things that most people can do to dramatically reduce their own vehicle emissions and the primary way to achieve this is to ditch the car for short journeys and try an active travel alternative: Walking cycling or Scooting. Not only is this better for individual health, it also makes a huge difference to carbon emissions and air quality."

Cllr Heather Timms, Warwickshire County Council's portfolio holder for Environment, Heritage and Culture



BRI-STOR SYSTEMS

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Bri-Stor Systems, part of The HEX Group, sits on a 30-acre site in Hixon, Staffordshire. Established in 1983, Bri-Stor has developed an extensive range of commercial vehicle conversion solutions - including internal racking, roof equipment, on-board power and van racking accessories for some of the largest fleets in the UK.

As a complete conversion partner, we work closely with our customers to offer a full turn-key solution in a flexible and dynamic way. Our expertise extends over a wide spectrum of services and our complete managed solution comprises consultancy and design through to in-house manufacture, livery application and vehicle de-fleet.

As the UK's largest converter of lightweight commercial vehicles and manufacturer of van storage systems, innovation is a core part of our business, and we work closely to quickly understand the specific requirements, developing custom products and solutions where required.

Every business has their own individual requirements for their commercial fleets, that's why our bespoke conversions are renowned for their dependability and efficiency. We use lightweight, yet sturdy materials to increase the usable space and payload, delivering the best combination to help speed up job completion and save on fuel.



Standard Conversion



Bespoke Conversion



We've used Bri-Stor for many years now and always had a pleasant user experience. Not only is the racking always suited, bespoke to our business need, but the design stages allow for full user group interaction thanks to their large showroom where development and demonstrations can take place.

James Rooney
Fleet Engineering and Innovation Manager
British Gas



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Ashley Kemp
Demonstration and Press Test Manager
Renault Trucks UK

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Call: 01889 272 041 or email: orders@hexsignsandgraphics.co.uk



The Fleet Interview Nottingham City Council

With Matt Ralfe, Innovation & Change Manager at Nottingham City Council

Since the arrival of the first EVs on Nottingham City Council's fleet, over a decade ago, the local authority has been leading the way in not only decarbonising its own operations, but also taking the expertise developed over this time and sharing with local communities and businesses through Nottingham Electric Vehicle Services.

The strategy in place at Nottingham City Council acknowledges the complexities of transitioning to an EV fleet and at the same time recognises the full range of opportunities – such as V2G – that further develop the positive impact of EV transition. Having first spoken with Matt Ralfe, Innovation & Change Manager at Nottingham, around eighteen months ago, Essential Fleet Manager was delighted to catch up again and hear how positive change has continued as the challenges have multiplied.

Q: What have been the major developments, just in terms of EV numbers, within your electrification strategy since last Spring?

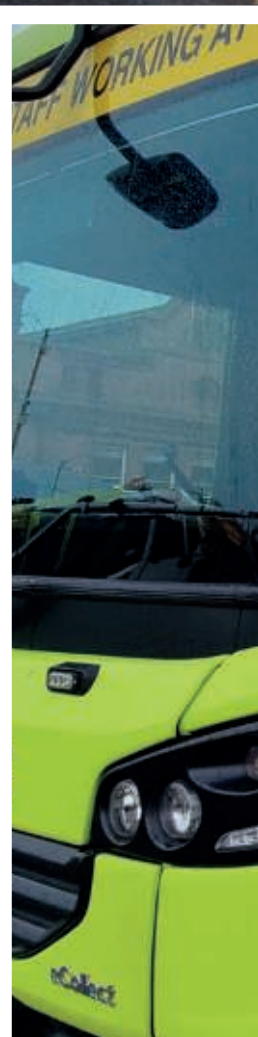
Since last spring we have added another 47 EVs to the Council's fleet, taking us to 243 in total – over half of our fleet. More impressive than the numbers though is the type of electric vehicles we're now buying; as we already have a fully electric panel van fleet the purchases over the last year have been more specialist vehicles such as 15 26t and 3 18t eRCVs, 7 compact sweepers, 7.5t box vans and a 17-seat minibus.

It's been a fantastic learning opportunity to integrate so many specialist zero emission vehicles in to our fleet within a short space of time. As the complexity of the vehicles increases, so too does the charging infrastructure and training for both drivers and mechanics. To see the significant reduction in fuel use

and CO2 emissions though has been really pleasing and the reaction from drivers and citizens has been great too.

Q: What is your approach to ensuring that there is adequate infrastructure to support the growing number of EVs in your fleet? How has in-house expertise contributed to this along with a wide and increasing range of supplier options?

With our light vehicles, due to their lower daily mileage and higher maximum range, we operate on a roughly 1:3 ratio of charge points to vehicles; this has developed over time as we have tried to ensure a smooth initial acceptance of new EV types by installing the same number of chargers as vehicles for the first "batch" purchased but then, as our colleagues get more comfortable with the vehicles' range and capabilities, we bring in vehicles without installing charge points.



One of the best choices we made was to train up our in house electricians to be able to install charge points as it gives us the flexibility to (relatively!) quickly install charge points where we need them and fix any that have faults, it has also given great experience to our electrical colleagues and we are now able to use their expertise to install the best infrastructure for the job. Taking advantage of this knowledge and the rapidly changing charge point market has allowed us to implement the right charge point in the right place, which means we have chargers that are portable, others that don't need to be earthed and ones sat on pre-cast mounts – each has saved us time, cost and risk.

Q: What are the specific challenges associated with electrifying the larger and specialist vehicle assets?

Unsurprisingly bigger vehicles, bigger challenges but the hurdles we face are much the same, namely cost, vehicle availability, driver and mechanic availability and training and stakeholder buy in. Ideally though, anyone looking at electrifying their fleet will have started with their lighter vehicles and therefore be ready for the step up in challenge when it comes to the larger and specialist vehicles.

The one thing that has taken us most by surprise though is charging infrastructure, all the other challenges above are sort of “twice the vehicle, twice the challenge” but infrastructure has felt more like a tenfold increase in complexity!

The power needed to charge these vehicles is substantial and when we are talking about co-locating 20 eHGVs in a row then the cable size (and therefore ducting, groundworks, physical and electrical protection) required is huge and it has been a challenge to balance what power the charge points need

to distribute to ensure the vehicle completes its round with the implications of us overegging it and providing too much power to the units and the increased expense and disruption associated with that.

Even something as simple as where the charging socket is located on the vehicle has a massive impact when it comes to HGVs, standard practice is to reverse in to spaces but the charging gun then needs to get to the front of the vehicle which would mean thicker (more expensive) and longer cables, which then carries the risk of them being driven over by their neighbouring 27 tonne vehicle and the damage that would cause. After a lot of deliberation and risk registers, we ended up changing the lining and lighting to allow drivers to safely drive into the spaces.

Q: Are the original targets and objectives of the fleet strategy still on track or has there been a need to make any significant adjustments?

We've always been clear that with our strategy to deliver a zero-emission fleet by 2028 is dependent on the market. Like many local authorities, we operate some quite niche vehicles where it is unlikely to be financially viable for OEMs to invest in the R&D required. However, we are finding that the more modular vehicles now being brought to market are far more flexible than we could have hoped and so we've already been able to electrify vehicles we didn't think possible back in 2016 when we started this journey, so we see no reason that our fleet can't be fully electric by 2028.

Cont'd on page 20...





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Q: Supply chain difficulties and rising costs can of course have a huge impact on plans. How has your Public Sector ULEV Procurement Framework assisted in mitigating these difficulties?

The ongoing turbulence with supply chains has been well documented in recent years; especially within the transport sector where the production of silicon chips has meant vehicle manufacturing has struggled to keep up with demand. The shortage has resulted in delayed and - in certain circumstances - unfulfilled orders for organisations across the UK, making it difficult for them to effectively plan vehicle replacements and purchasing.

The Council's Public Sector ULEV Procurement Framework aims to mitigate the impacts of supply chain issues by working closely with customers and suppliers. The relationships established via the framework have enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of vehicle demand and the market supporting it; this not only allows us to provide customers with the latest advice and guidance on vehicle availability, but also creates opportunity for suppliers which might not have been previously considered. Our framework also facilitates competition between suppliers which can result in lower costs for customers – therefore improving business cases and speeding up the transition to greener forms of transport.

How is Nottingham Electric Vehicle Services assisting the uptake of electric vehicles?

Nottingham Electric Vehicle Services, the Council's specialist workshop and eMobility hub, was developed to support

and encourage the growing number of ULEVs coming into the city. The aim was to increase the number of EVs sold by providing confidence to drivers by ensuring they had a local, knowledgeable and affordable service provider to maintain, service and repair their vehicles.

Q: Could you explain the development of your V2G project, how it will benefit Nottingham City Council and how it will provide learnings and advice for other fleet operators?

In simple terms, the aim of our V2G project is to run our Eastcroft Depot solely from direct solar or night-rate electricity by extracting energy from photovoltaic panels and our electric vehicles and storing it in two large batteries on site. The goal is both to save the Council money from us no longer needing to pay for day time electricity but also to show how a "micro-grid" can be created with the use of technologies we already have and how electric vehicles can be the answer to some of the energy issues we are seeing rather than the problem, which is how they are sometimes portrayed.

We secured funding to deliver a City Pilot demonstrator as part of the CleanMobilEnergy project.

The project covers the installation and provision of 40 battery electric V2G compatible vans and cars, up to 40 V2G bi-directional units to enable the vehicles to be used for energy storage and grid balancing, a minimum of 88kW of solar photovoltaics, two 250kWh batteries and a purpose built 'Interoperable Energy Management System' to control energy flows.

The demonstrator aims to maximise the use of locally generated, but fluctuating, renewable generation to cut the carbon

emissions and costs associated with charging electric fleet vehicles, as well as reducing peak demand by using vehicles for short-term storage.

In order for this project to work, Eastcroft Depot has received an upgrade with a new incoming HV supply and substation, along with a reconfigured LV supply on site.

The project is exploring new technologies, encouraging behaviour change and developing business models that will enable the sharing of the value V2G can bring to the grid, local and regional businesses and the consumer.

Q: The pandemic caused major shifts in working practices that will often remain in place despite the removal of restrictions. How did these changes affect employee mobility and how has your Pool Car facility evolved to meet the current needs of your employees?

In response to the pandemic, the Council introduced further flexible working arrangements with a shift towards hybrid working where possible, for the to effectively support the delivery of our services and meet the needs of our citizens in the changing climate.

Employees have always been encouraged to use the most sustainable method of business travel and we recently launched a new innovative web-based booking platform for our pool fleet to facilitate this. Using Future Transport Zones funding, the system was procured and developed in conjunction with Booking Lab and Oracle Surveillance Ltd, utilising the latest technology to drive the Council's ambition towards a fully electric fleet and improve the customer and backoffice experience.

The Council's 22 pool vehicles can be hired flexibly by the hour or by the day from the Council's car parks and both key depot sites. The platform also provides the opportunity to expand these location options in the future, to ensure the pool fleet is accessible for employees when working from home, reducing grey fleet mileage.

Key features of the system include:

- Vehicle optimisation, with vehicle booking rules in place to select the most environmentally friendly vehicle for the customer's journey

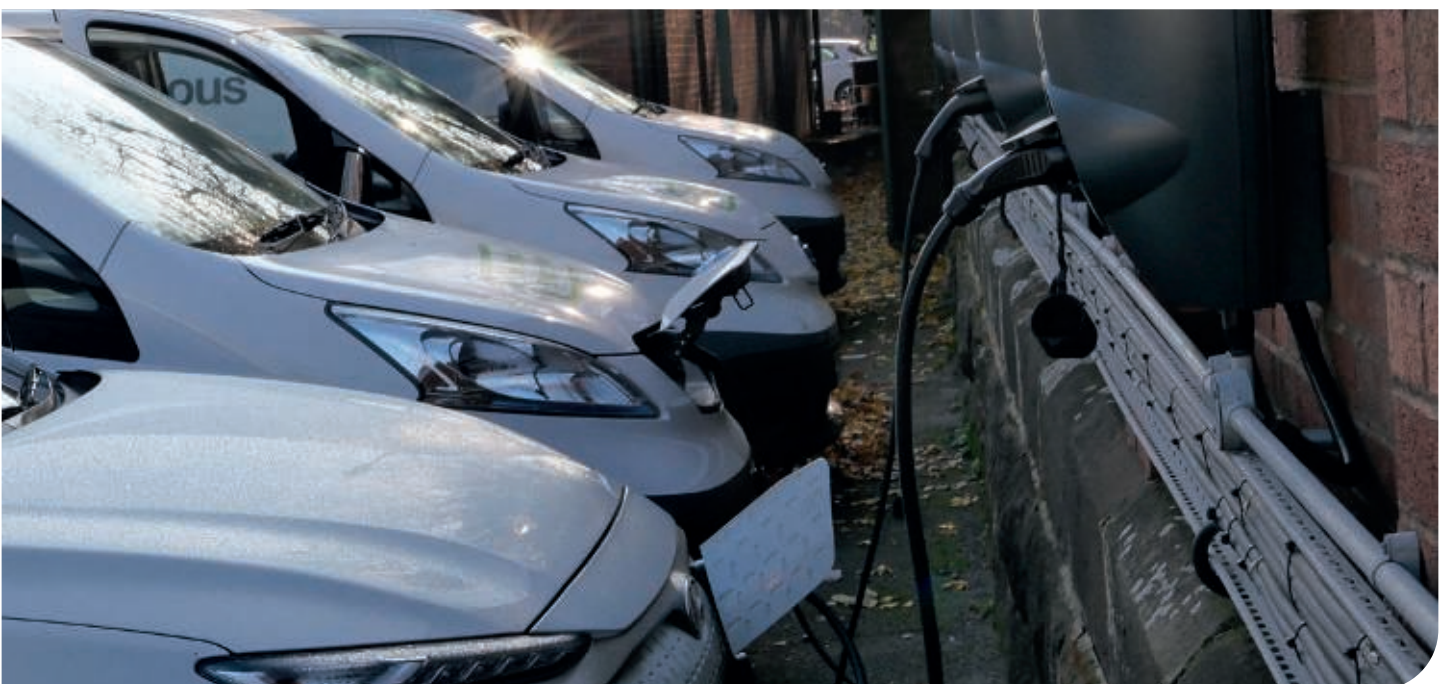


- Minimised administration, from automated user set up via an interface with the DAVIS Licence Check system through to no key handover required
- First of its kind remote access and immobilisation technology, where a QR code is used to access the vehicle keys
- Full customer visualisation and improved experience, with 24/7 access to bookings allowing users to access the platform at a time convenient to them
- Vehicle insight through telematics, tracking and analysing bookings to ensure the pool fleet variety has as few emissions as possible, while still meeting the needs of customers

Q: Given the expertise developed at Nottingham, how would you best advise an organisation about to embark on the journey to Net Zero?

We want to continue to help others on their fleet electrification journeys and we are always keen to talk to anyone involved in EVs or eMobility, particularly other public sector organisations. Contact can be made via email to NEVS@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Cont'd on page 22...



...Cont'd from page 21

Colchester Borough Council - using the NCC Public Sector ULEV Procurement Framework

When last we spoke, Matt talked about how Nottingham City Council have launched a procurement framework for other public sector organisations, so we asked one of the first users of this framework - Rob Doran, Fleet & Depot Manager at Colchester Borough Council – why he chose this framework and what the experience was like:

At Colchester, the majority of our fleet is leased but we're looking to move to a wholly owned fleet and so we spoke to Matt at Nottingham City Council back in 2020 to understand what his experience has been with EVs. With a carbon neutral target of 2030 for the Council, this seemed the perfect opportunity for us to move straight to zero emission vehicles. We heard that Nottingham are saving money as well as carbon with their EVs and that they're often performing better than the diesel alternatives, so we were obviously keen to get started on our own electrification journey.

We sent our fleet list and mileage to Matt's team and they gave us advice and recommendations on which vehicles would be best to electrify and we placed an order for some electric vans through the NCC Public Sector ULEV Procurement Framework; it was all a simple process and we had the confidence that the vehicle specifications had been written by Nottingham and based on their years of experience with EVs. They also gave us some great advice on the installation of the charging infrastructure we needed to power these vans.

Unfortunately, six weeks before we were due to receive our vans, the supplier called to tell us they were no longer going to fulfil the order; this left us in a difficult position as we had the charging infrastructure and drivers ready to receive the vehicles and didn't want to end up facing another 9 month lead time. We spoke to Nottingham City Council to see if there was anything they could do and, using their relationship with the vehicle suppliers, they were able to source alternative vans that performed the same duty and which could be delivered within the timeframe we'd planned for.






All in all, we felt that it was hugely beneficial to use the Framework and it really felt like we were working in partnership with Nottingham City Council to ensure Colchester got the best vehicles for the job at the best cost and timescale. We'll definitely be using the framework again and would recommend others do so as the more learning we can share, the quicker we can all decarbonise transport in the public sector and benefit from the financial savings and air quality improvements.



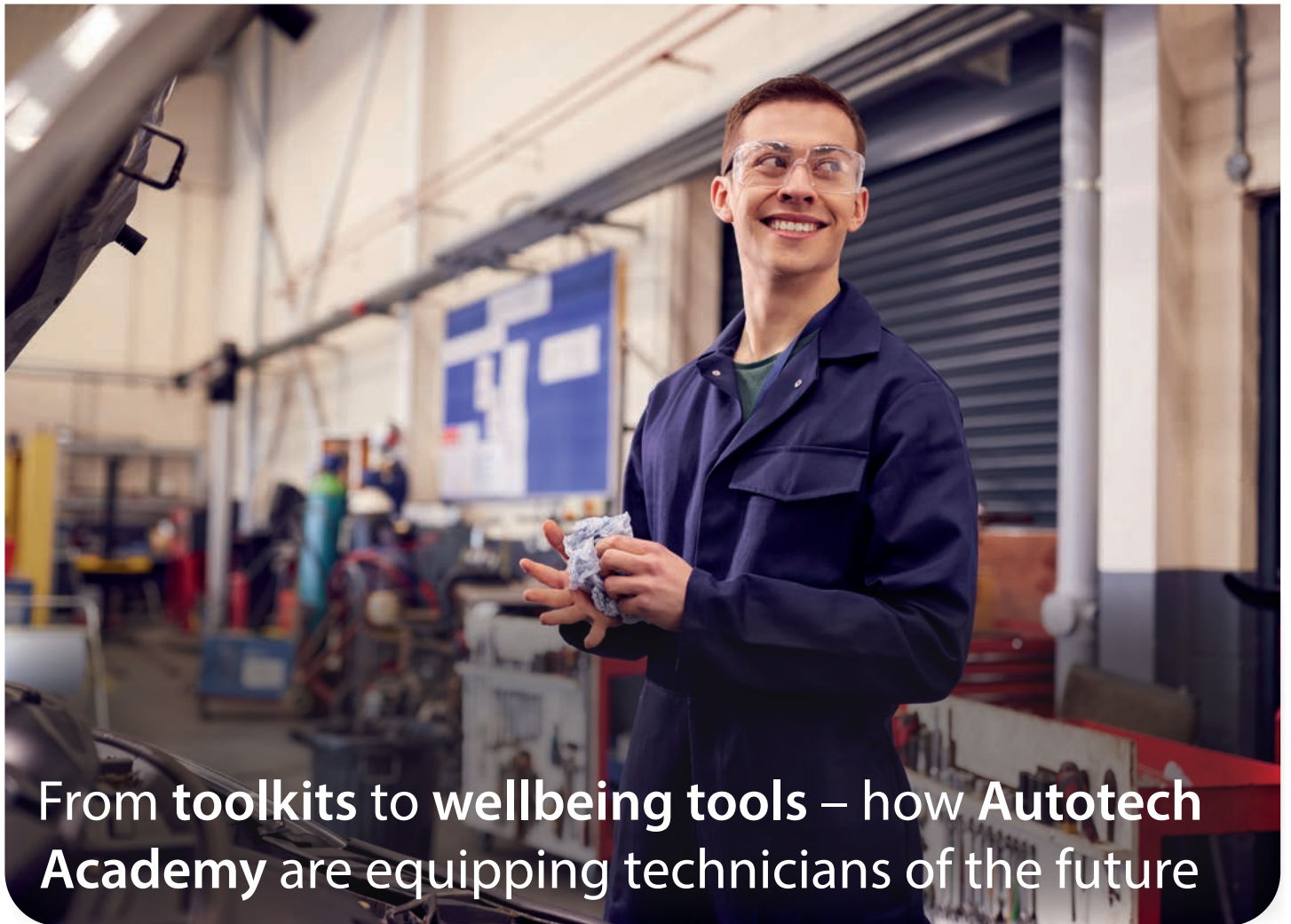
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From toolkits to wellbeing tools – how Autotech Academy are equipping technicians of the future

In the week which saw World Mental Health Day, Autotech Academy reinforced its commitment to young talent entering the automotive industry. From pledging to train its internal team to ensure they have the necessary skills to support newly qualified automotive students entering the sector, to creating a toolkit for employers.

In a direct bid to create a culture of change within the industry, Autotech Academy will be equipping newly qualified vehicle technicians and MOT testers with the skills to easily spot the early signs of mental health issues in peers and know the routes available to access support – setting a precedent for future generations of vehicle technicians.

Since its launch in January last year, Autotech Academy, a division of employment and training solutions company Autotech Group, has closed the loop between FE Colleges and automotive employers through its 6-12 month paid internship initiative.

Autotech Academy has helped almost 150 newly qualified Level 3 automotive

students secure a role, generating a new recruitment stream for the industry and the concept has been embraced by main dealer groups including Marshall Motor Group, Ford and Honda, along with the fast fit and independent sectors.

Equipping the interns with everything they need to start their automotive career, from a starter tool kit to a uniform, Autotech Academy also provides support to ensure the transition from college to employment is as smooth as possible.

Now, as employers step up efforts to counteract mental health challenges their employees are facing, Autotech Academy is set to enhance this support. This includes providing its internal team with dedicated training to ensure they can signpost interns when required and creating a dedicated toolkit for employers to help them build a positive working culture, with a collation of resources and tips to spot mental health issues, while promoting positive well-being.

According to mental health charity Mind, 91% of people under the age of 24 have

experienced mental distress or accessed mental health services since the onset of Covid-19. And in 2019, automotive charity BEN released a whitepaper which revealed that poor mental health could cost the automotive sector £1.2 billion-a-year.

Following two years of disruption and enforced isolation, this figure could well be exacerbated.

While emphasis on mental health in the workplace has increased over recent years, young people entering employment for the first time can find it hard to speak up. This is particularly felt by the current generation of college leavers living with the Covid-19 legacy of remote learning and social restrictions.

“We are looking to build a foundation of support for young people entering the industry. A culture where mental health issues are discussed, and support is easily accessible,” comments Simon King, Managing Director of Autotech Group. “These newly qualified vehicle technicians are the future of the industry and embedding this within them will create a cultural shift.”

Fleet replacement programme continues to help Aberdeen City Council with net zero targets



A programme to replace Aberdeen City Council's fleet with vehicles using the latest technology and reduced emissions, continues.

The City Growth and Resources members approved the Fleet Replacement Programme which ensures the Council maintains an optimum operating age profile of the fleet to a maximum seven-year profile for HGV, five years for vans, and three years for other vehicles, mobile plant, and small hand-held plant.

A report to committee said this ongoing practice aims to minimise expensive repair costs and give an enhanced residual value of the asset on replacement.

Aberdeen City Council Co-Leader Councillor Ian Yuill said: *"We are committed to the council reaching net zero and it is good to hear our fleet service is helping us along that journey."*

"There has been a lot of good work which has been carried out on hydrogen or electric power as the fuel of choice for new purchases for our fleet and alternative considerations of dual fuel and diesel as the current market and infrastructure permits."

"We look forward to hearing the next update for how the journey to an even

greener fleet is progressing."

The report to committee said there is a Fleet Asset Management Plan which identifies age and replacement plans for all vehicles and plant and information from this is used to determine the Fleet Replacement Programme and its projected spend for 2022/23.

The Fleet Asset Management Plan continues to be refreshed to better identify the replacement programme and includes carbon use data to reflect the Council's net zero ambition to work towards de-carbonising its in-house fleet and introduce new vehicles with the latest technology with reduced emissions.

The report said whilst the Fleet Asset Management Plan reflects current type of vehicles, the market availability and continuing development are such that like-for-like replacement may not be the default position should better options be identified.

The fleet service is scanning industry opportunities to identify best value and best asset replacement.

The report said to maximise development of a greener fleet, all new purchases will be focused on hydrogen/

electric power as the fuel of choice with alternative considerations of dual fuel and diesel as the current market and infrastructure permits.

Existing vehicles which are not due for replacement will be considered for conversion to dual fuel, which is a vehicle that can operate on both diesel/hydrogen, or diesel/electric.

The report said the inclusion of these vehicles will increase the zero-emission fleet as the council progress on the journey away from carbon fuel. The renewable energy vehicle market is being explored to identify latest innovation and development to adapt current vehicle procurement options towards the council's greener ambitions.

The Council is considering EV recharging facilities and capacity for future council fleet replacements with charging points strategically placed to align with council buildings to ensure that all vehicles can be recharged before starting daily operational activities.

The report said as well as working with the council's finance service on procuring new vehicles and plant using current capital budgets, it is also actively sourcing additional external grant funding.



Multi-role Mercedes-Benz Unimog adds flexible, 'go anywhere' capability for Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service

Fire officers in Cornwall have responded to the increasing frequency of wildfires and flash floods by commissioning an extreme off-road Mercedes-Benz Unimog that can be kitted out to tackle both types of incident and much more besides.

The ultra-high mobility Unimog UHE will transport mission-specific 'pods', each of which is packed with specialist equipment.

These are the work of prime contractor Emergency One (UK), of Cumnock, Ayrshire, a leading manufacturer of appliances and specialist vehicles for fire services. Its conversion design included three sets of access steps that fold up against both sides and the rear of the pods while in situ.

Dealer South Cave Tractors supplied the 4x4 chassis, which has the maximum permissible gross weight of 14.5 tonnes. Technicians at its workshop in Brough, East Yorkshire, also fitted a sub-frame and, immediately behind the cab, the Palfinger PK12502 SH crane used to lift the pods on and off the vehicle, as well as the

outriggers and winches front and rear.

As a U5023 variant, the Unimog is powered by a 5.1-litre four-cylinder engine that produces 170 kW (230 hp) and a muscular 900 Nm of torque across a broad rev range, which it transmits via an optional EAS automated manual version of the standard gearbox. To supplement its eight forward and six reverse gears, Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service specified the working and crawler gear range, which provides another eight forward and reverse ratios.

The vehicle offers unrivalled traction thanks to its strong yet torsionally flexible frame and a torque tube suspension system that achieves exceptional levels of axle articulation. The extreme off-road Unimog has a standard water fording capability of 800mm but the Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service vehicle has been optionally specified for operation in depths of up to 1,200mm.

The innovative Central Tyre Inflation system allows the driver to drop the pressures from the cab when the Unimog is off-road. In addition to increasing grip,

this brings an environmental benefit by minimising damage to the ground. Tyres can then be reinflated when back on a hard surface for greater safety and fuel efficiency at normal road speeds.

The new Unimog is based at Tolvaddon Community Fire Station, Camborne. It was supplied with four pods – one each for 'Wildfire Response', 'Flood Response', 'Line Rescue' and 'Disaster Response' – and also boasts the additional power and communications systems that will allow it to double as a mobile command unit.

This is the authority's second Mercedes-Benz Unimog. The first, a rescue pump with crew cab, is built on a U500 implement carrying chassis and works from Launceston Fire Station – this unit has provided outstandingly reliable service since it was purchased in 2007.

Firefighters from stations across the county have battled record numbers of fires in gorse and other vegetation throughout this exceptionally hot, dry summer – during one 48-hour period, 422 calls were made to fire control, putting the service under "sustained

operational pressure.”

According to Mark Salter, Group Manager – Assets Team, at Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service, the latest addition to the fleet will significantly enhance its ability to deal with some of the most challenging incidents.

“The Mercedes-Benz Unimog was the obvious chassis on which to base this new and highly specialised appliance,” he said. “Given some of the rough terrain here in Cornwall, exceptional off-road performance was an absolute ‘must’. No other vehicle with a similar carrying capacity can match the Unimog’s ‘go anywhere’ aptitude.

As a result of the drought we’ve dealt with numerous fires on difficult-to-access moorland in recent weeks. The Wildfire Response pod carries a 1,000-litre water tank and nebular misting system, as well as bush cutters for creating fire breaks, misting leaf blowers and other gear, so will be an invaluable aid to firefighters in tackling such incidents in the future.

“The Line Rescue pod carries a versatile range of line rescue and recovery systems, including a bipod and Tirfor winches, that will be used to recover members of the public and large animals after falls over cliffs or down old mineshafts, a regular occurrence in this part of the world.

“Meanwhile,” he continued, “the Flood Response pod, coupled with the Unimog’s impressive wading ability, will enable us to recover residents who have become stranded in their homes after torrential downpours, as has happened two or three times in recent years.

“Completing the picture, the Disaster Response pod contains heavy-duty equipment that might be used to rescue casualties in the event of anything from a building collapse to a plane crash or an accident involving a heavy goods vehicle.”

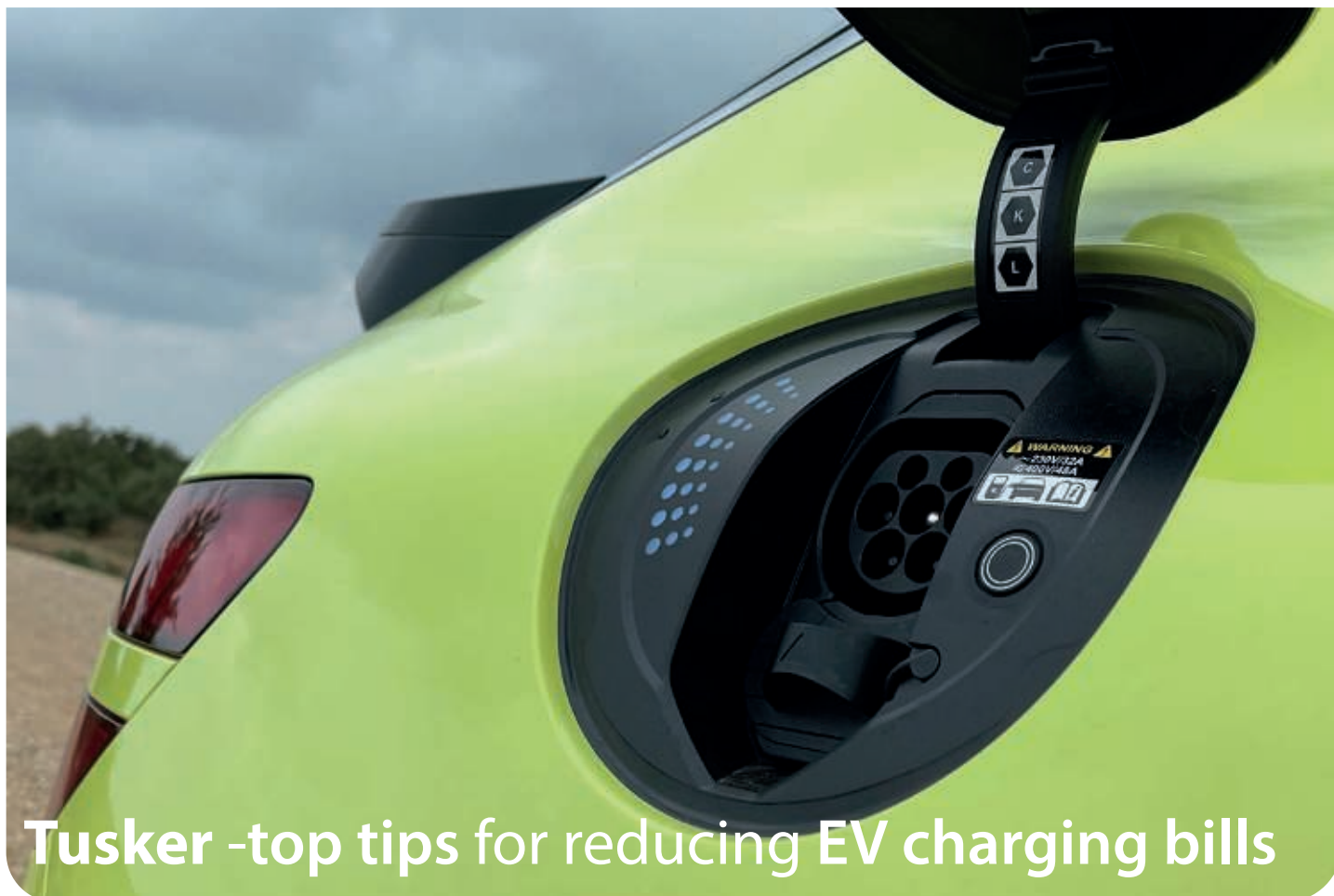
He added: “From the very early stages of specification and issue of the tender documents this has been a complex and demanding project, so to take delivery of the finished vehicle is extremely exciting. Emergency One have been brilliant throughout, facilitating factory inspections and answering all of our questions. Nothing has been too much trouble.

“Once training programmes have been completed for the firefighters who will operate the new Unimog, and our workshop colleagues who will maintain it with parts support from our local Mercedes-Benz Dealer, I’ve every confidence that this impressive vehicle will prove its worth by providing the increased operational capability for which it was designed.”



Preparing for action: Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service colleagues, from left, Contracts Manager Adrian Stone, Watch Manager – Assets Ben Goddard, and Driver-trainer Phil James are pictured during training on the new Unimog





Tusker -top tips for reducing EV charging bills

Tusker, the UK's leading provider of salary sacrifice car benefits schemes, with more than 20,000 green vehicles on its fleet, has produced some top tips to help EV drivers keep their monthly charging costs down.

Tusker has included advice on how to access free and reduced charging prices against a background of rising energy costs for drivers and employers.

The advice will be particularly useful for EV drivers who have just taken delivery of their very first zero emissions car.

"We want to make all EV drivers aware of the different charging prices that are on offer at different locations and at different times of the day that will help them save money," explained Paul Gilshan, Tusker's CEO.

"Even with the increase in electricity prices, an EV will still enable drivers to save money compared to driving a petrol or diesel car," he added.

- **15% of chargers are free to use** - Zap Map surveyed its charging network in June 2022 and found that 5,340 out of 35,000 of chargers were free to use of which 4,901 were either fast or

rapid chargers. Scotland provided the highest percentage of free chargers followed by the southeast. Supermarkets were the best source of free charging locations followed by car parks. Go to <https://www.zap-map.com/free-ev-charging-points-where-are-they/>

- **Home charging day/night tariffs are available** - many energy companies offer a day/night tariff at home which means drivers get access to cheaper charging between midnight and 7am. Drivers can set their car's app to make sure they charge using cheaper electricity.
- **Use council chargers where you can** - the network of council funded chargers is beginning to increase with suppliers like Connected Kerb partnering with local authorities to increase their on-street charger network. In some cases, the energy is partly subsidised which provides for cheaper charging.
- **Make use of work chargers** - with energy bills for UK businesses improving due to the new government support package it may be cheaper to charge an EV at

work. Drivers should compare the charging rates before charging in the company car park.

- **Smart chargers reduce energy costs** - from July 1, 2022, all home and workplace EV chargers should have smart charging capabilities in place to enable drivers to view their charging history. Many smart charge points come pre-configured to avoid charging between 8am and 11am and 4pm and 10pm on weekdays which are considered peak hours. It also helps the National Grid adapt to EV demands and encourages drivers to avoid peak hours charging. Drivers should make sure home and workplace chargers have this functionality in place.
- **Drivers pay more for fast charging** - generally, the faster the charge the more expensive it is, so it's worth checking the different charger rates whilst planning your journey and before using a charger.
- **Motorway chargers can be more pricey** - be aware that drivers generally pay more for electricity at motorway charging just as ICE drivers pay more for petrol and diesel at motorway services.

Top tips for drivers during darker days: see and be seen, says GEM



Road Safety and breakdown organisation GEM Motoring Assist is encouraging all road users to see and be seen through the coming winter months. The nights are closing in, bringing reduced visibility, making hazards harder to spot, and increasing the risk of a collision.

October tends to bring a spike in road conditions, especially towards the end of the month when the clocks have been turned back an hour and it's dark by four o'clock or shortly after.

However, a combination of straightforward actions can reduce these risks for drivers and those they meet on their journeys.

"Let's start with how well we see," says GEM Chief Executive Neil Worth. *"Research has shown that we can lose 40 per cent of our eyesight over several years, without even noticing. So, booking an eye test is a good way to ensure we can see and react to what's happening around us when we're at the wheel."*

"Keeping vehicle lights clean and free of dirt means they'll do their job more effectively, while ensuring your screen wash is topped

up will help you to have a clear view through your windscreen – particularly important when bad weather reduces visibility."

"Check wipers for breaks and grease too, as they do a vital job in keeping your windscreen clear and unobstructed."

Six other easy measures that can make a big difference in maximising visibility:

- Removing dirt from lights, windows and mirrors should be a priority before any journey.
- Rain and spray make driving difficult. Always slow down and use dipped headlights.
- Glare from low winter sun can reduce visibility. In some circumstances, especially in the early morning and late afternoon, glare can leave drivers with no forward vision at all. Reflected glare from wet roads can also seriously compromise what we're able to see. In these circumstances, slow down and even be prepared to stop.
- Don't delay switching on your lights. Even if your view of the road ahead is good, you may be much less visible

to other road users, especially if you drive a dark-coloured vehicle.

- Too many drivers are making themselves harder to spot from behind when daytime visibility is reduced. This is because they're relying on automatic lighting systems and daytime running lights, which may only activate front lights. So, take responsibility for the lights you need, and remember that your lights don't just help you to see other vehicles and hazards... they help others see you as well.
- Daytime running lights alone are not sufficient to make you properly visible to oncoming traffic and other road users, especially in foggy or wet conditions. So, switch on your dipped headlights and make yourself properly visible.

"Just about all the information we need as drivers comes from what we see," concludes Neil Worth. *"Therefore, ensuring we see as much as possible will help us to stay safe, and will mean we're doing our bit to keep others around us safe as well."*

Westminster celebrates World EV Day with 14 new electric street cleaning bikes



Veolia, in partnership with Westminster City Council, took to the streets to roll out their new, industry-leading fleet of electric street cleansing bikes for World EV Day. The set of 14 new bikes are an addition to the extensive Westminster fleet of over 60 electric street cleansing and collections vehicles.

The new electric bikes have allowed Veolia to cut down on the number of diesel vehicles used within the borough. Using a bike in replacement of a diesel vehicle not only significantly reduces noise pollution, but allows for a 100%

reduction in Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions. The electric bikes contribute towards the 89% of carbon savings that the overall electrification of the West End Fleet has created - strengthening Westminster City Council's commitment to net-zero by 2040.

Councillor Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality, unveiled the new fleet under Marble Arch, and held discussions on how Veolia and Westminster City Council can work together to provide a safer and greener borough.

In becoming the benchmark company

for ecological transformation, Veolia is committed to tackle climate change, resource depletion, biodiversity collapse, and pollution by expanding the use of existing solutions, and developing new innovative solutions. The bikes are an innovative intervention set to change standard collection and cleansing models, and are currently being used as part of the fly-tip collection process for the delivery of commercial waste bags, and for the monitoring of hot spot areas.

The bikes also ensure that waste can continue to be collected during road closures and within pedestrianised



areas. Their use is a step towards a new model of collection in the form of the village approach, with reduced focus on vehicles in and out of depots, and allows for increased coverage, a more efficient service, and less disturbance for residents. Helder Branco, General Manager for Veolia Westminster said: "We're very pleased to be operating with such a large electric fleet in Westminster. The new electric bikes not only lower emissions and contribute toward Westminster City Council's target of net-zero emissions by 2040, but also allow us to offer a further improved and streamlined service

for Westminster residents. We hope that our innovative approach to our operations across the borough will continue to set the standards for the future of sustainable operations."

Councillor Dimoldenberg, Cabinet Member for City Management and Air Quality said: "Westminster has some of the highest carbon emissions and poorest air quality of any local authority, and urgent steps need to be taken if we want to improve. The electrification of the Veolia waste cleansing fleet demonstrates how seriously the new administration is

taking air quality."

Leo Bethell, Head of Partnerships for EAV said: "Supporting Veolia and Westminster City Council work towards their net-zero emissions target, by facilitating the adoption of our electric cargo bikes, has been a great testament to the innovation in Westminster and to the versatility of the EAV 2Cubed. Tailoring the EAV 2Cubed to enhance the efficiency of Veolia's waste management operations should inspire the wider adoption of innovative vehicles in this sector, and act as a blueprint for the modern city."



New integration sees FleetCheck become part of ABAX's partner programme

A newly-created integration has seen telematics specialist ABAX integrate with FleetCheck, one of the UK's leading fleet software and management specialists, and for both companies to announce a new strategic partnership.

The application programming interface (API) means that odometer data collected through ABAX products can be accessed directly in FleetCheck's fleet management software, providing a high level of visibility from a single dashboard.

Peter Golding, managing director at FleetCheck, said:

"ABAX are one of the largest telematics companies in Europe and we're very pleased to be able to welcome them to our partner programme."

"Their products are widely used across our customer base, especially by commercial vehicle fleets, and this new integration will make life much easier for them, helping consolidate essential data streams into one place."

Currently, there are more than 40 different companies and organisations taking part in the FleetCheck Partner Programme, ranging from telematics companies such as ABAX to fuel card providers and breakdown recovery to leasing specialists. Peter explained that, since the very earliest days of FleetCheck, the company had sought out expert partners in the fleet sector with which to work.

"The purpose of our partnerships vary from company to company but essentially we help them complement and enhance

the service they provide to their customers while, at the same time, applying lessons we learn from them to our own clients.

"Sometimes these relationships are commercial – we may provide fleet software to a partner's customers or they offer products and services to ours – but at other times, they are very much based on sharing ideas and best practice. Each is different."

Craig Allan, Global Director of Key Accounts and Partnerships at ABAX, stated:

"Customers are at the center of everything that ABAX does, and as such adding a valuable Partner like FleetCheck increases our service offering. Using two great solutions will enable our mutual customers to be more efficient and profitable."

Crown Waste Management continues Volvo fleet transition with latest tipper order



Supplied by Volvo Truck and Bus Centre South & East, Crown Waste Management's fleet was previously stocked almost exclusively by a rival manufacturer, but the operator was so impressed by a Volvo demonstration truck it trialed that it plans to welcome more of the Swedish marque's models going forward.

Kash Chaudry, Managing Director at Crown Waste Management, says: "When we tried our first Volvo it was clear from the outset that it was capable of everything promised and more. Our drivers were particularly impressed by the technology onboard and when combined with the truck's fuel performance, it made for a very competitive package. As a result, they've been on our radar ever since." Crown Waste Management's new FMXs all feature a D13K 420 hp Euro-6 Step E engine, capable of producing 2,100 Nm of torque. They are paired with Thompsons tipper bodywork and driven through

Volvo's 12-speed automatic I-Shift transmission which makes driving easier, safer and more comfortable. Chaudry has also equipped his new purchases – bought outright – with Volvo's Active Safety+ package. This includes some of the company's latest active safety technologies, such as adaptive cruise control, an advanced emergency brake system and a lane departure warning system. Further safety gains are unlocked via the superior combination of agility, visibility and durability offered by the FMX's day cab and Volvo's Dynamic Steering system. "The cab's visibility and the vehicle's overall manoeuvrability make the FMX an ideal match for our needs," adds Chaudry. "We're an extremely busy operator that regularly works in demanding locations, but the FMX never misses a beat. We're constantly impressed by what Volvo's technology can handle."

Built for the toughest conditions and most demanding assignments, Crown

Waste Management's new FMXs are expected to clock up to 70,000 km annually, working Monday through Friday for the company's construction customers. The workload will also include the government's HS2 project. The vehicles are backed by comprehensive three-year Volvo Gold contracts, guaranteeing Crown Waste Management worry-free ownership and maximum uptime courtesy of Volvo Truck and Bus Centre South & East's Coventry depot. With more than 20 years' experience, Crown Waste Management is a sustainable waste management solutions provider, offering waste and resource management, recycling, aggregate and plant hire services from its Nuneaton headquarters. Its new FMXs join an already diverse FORS-accredited fleet consisting of 90 vehicles across all sizes.



TriAgg charges ahead with all-electric eVito

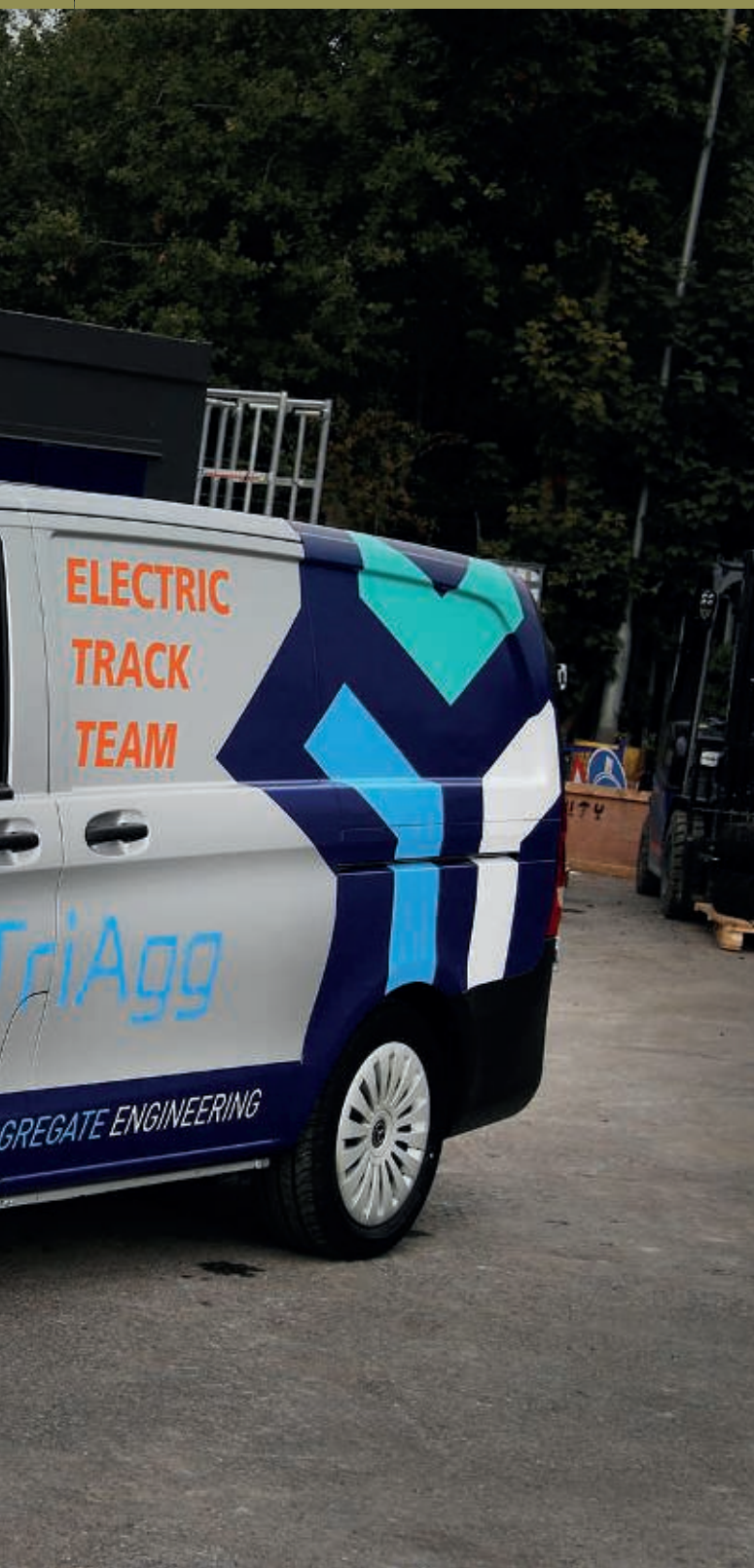
Asphalt surfacing and groundwork construction specialist TriAgg has joined the race towards electrified transport by commissioning its first battery-powered Mercedes-Benz eVito from trusted supplier MBNI Truck & Van.

The eVito has joined a fleet of 20 Mercedes-Benz vans – comprising Citan, Vito and Sprinter models – the vast majority of which were delivered by the same Dealer in the last couple of years.

Although TriAgg is based in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, Managing Director Dave Dawe sees nothing unusual about choosing to source his vehicles from the official Mercedes-Benz agent for Northern Ireland.

"I bought my first van from MBNI shortly after we set up the business in 2020, and have stuck with them ever since," he said. "Initially I contacted the Dealer because I'd seen an online advertisement for a vehicle for sale from stock, which was exactly what I was looking for. Sales Executive Chris Boyd was extremely helpful throughout the purchase process – he was always available and happy to talk whenever I called.

"He stayed in touch even after the van was delivered so as soon as I was ready to order our second vehicle, I knew there was no need to look any further. Chris and the MBNI team have continued to look after us courteously and efficiently ever since. When you find someone who's willing to go the extra mile you stick with them,



which is exactly what we've done.

"So when we decided to invest in our first electric vehicle, I knew I could trust Chris to give me all the right advice, and would not have considered going anywhere else. In fact I've since recommended MBNI to a friend who has since taken delivery of his own new vans and is delighted to be enjoying the same excellent service."

TriAgg has remained loyal to Mercedes-Benz vans too, thanks to Mr Dawe's experience of running a vehicle fleet as Managing Director of a national surfacing company before launching the new business venture with partners Andrew Maidment, David

Foster and Thomas Bell.

"I was responsible for more than 40 vans, and the experience taught me that Mercedes-Benz vehicles are the safest and most reliable on the market," he recalled.

"The Sprinter and Vito models for which I was responsible never gave me any problems. It was also remarkable that despite several vans being involved in road accidents, their occupants invariably escaped with only the most minor injuries. When I started building my own fleet, therefore, I was only ever going to choose vans with a three-pointed star on the front."

The new eVito arrived at TriAgg just in time to take on a new and prestigious job as its first assignment – the van was on duty at the recent (July 30-31) UK round of the FIA Formula E World Championship for electric racing cars, held at London's ExCel centre. TriAgg was contracted to install the temporary surfaces, crash barriers and debris fencing for the race circuit, and the eVito was on call across the race meeting to deal with any emergency track repairs.

"It's a crucial role but repairs are only required in the event of an accident or other problem, so the eVito's services were not required. We thought it only right, though, to use an electric vehicle for such a high-profile showcase of battery power," said Mr Dawe.

"Now, though, we're looking forward to gaining a deeper understanding of how an electric van will fit into our day-to-day work patterns – and the signs are extremely promising. It's shown it can cover 160 miles before needing a recharge and is very smooth, quiet and comfortable to drive. In all other practical aspects it's just like any other Mercedes-Benz Vito, which from me is high praise indeed, but with zero tailpipe emissions. Engineer Michael Elgar, who drives the eVito, is highly impressed already."

TriAgg provides a range of asphalt and resin surfacing and linemarking services, as well as related civil engineering and surveying, for a commercial and private clients across the country. Most of its work is in the South-East of England but teams have been despatched as far afield as Cornwall, Scotland and Wales. Increasingly, its contracts include laying and marking dedicated parking bays for electric vehicle charging points.

The battery-powered Mercedes-Benz eVito has sliding load doors on both sides as well as rear doors that provide access, in the case of TriAgg's L2 variant, to up to 6.0m³ of cargo area.

The 66 kWh battery is securely mounted in a protective housing beneath the floor, so does not impinge on the available space. The vehicle offers an average range on a single charge of up to 162 miles (WLTP combined), with rapid charging up to 80% power in as little as 35 minutes (subject to power available and factors including temperature and cable type used).

Like all Mercedes-Benz vans, the eVito comes with a three-year, unlimited mileage warranty and MobiloVan, which provides free emergency roadside assistance, including 'out of charge' cover. The battery is guaranteed for eight years/160,000 km.



More fleet investment

Municipal vehicle hire company CTS Hire has expanded its fleet with the arrival of four new 26t Refuse Collection Vehicles. The vehicles are all Mercedes Econic Dennis Eagle Olympus Standard Width RCVs fitted with Terberg Splitlifts and equipped with 360° camera systems and tracking technology.

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director, CTS Hire:

"We are committed to continually refreshing our fleet to offer customers the very latest vehicle technology. These vehicles feature lower emission Euro 6 engines, and are fully equipped with safety and tracking technology. We pride ourselves on our flexibility, responsive service, and competitive hire packages. Our fleet is fully supported by our national mobile engineer and workshop network."



CTS Hire has also joined forces with RH Commercial Vehicles (RHCV) to add two brand new all-electric Renault Trucks 26-tonne refuse collection vehicles (eRCV's) to its rental fleet. This is the first time that councils and vehicle operators will be able to access such eRCV technology on short-term hire.

RHCV supplied CTS Hire with the Renault Trucks E-Tech D Wide electric rear-steer

chassis which have been paired with the Dennis Eagle OL21 bodies and Terberg Xtra bin lifts. The trucks are powered by 4x 66kW lithium batteries, which are located in the wheelbase.

Easy charging is also featured with the vehicle being specified with a charging port compatible with both AC and DC charging. It allows for modes 2, 3 and 4 charging from 22kW to 150kW. A full

recharge takes less than two hours with a fast (DC) charge or overnight on a conventional industrial outlet and adapts to all situations. Due to its zero tailpipe emissions, the Renault Trucks D Wide E-Tech is qualified to operate in Low Emission Zones (LEZ) and Ultra Low Emission Zones (ULEZ). Driver vision is aided by a window in the lower section of the near side slam door. It is also extremely quiet for operating in urban areas with reduced noise pollution. These features make it ideal for waste collection.

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director, CTS Hire:

"We are delighted to be able to offer our customers the opportunity to hire the latest electric refuse vehicle technology. Although some councils have been able to trial demonstration eRCVs for a week or two, this isn't always enough time to make a proper evaluation. By adding these vehicles to our hire fleet, we are giving councils and fleet operators the opportunity to carry out a thorough appraisal of the technology over a few months or more."

Paul Pearson, Commercial Director for RH Commercial Vehicles, commented:

"Providing CTS with such an innovative vehicle featuring the latest electric vehicle (EV) technology is the perfect opportunity to showcase the advancement and reliability of the Renault Trucks electric range. Our Nottingham workshop has recently become an authorised EV service and repairing dealer by Renault Trucks meaning we can become a leading supplier of vehicles that is better for our environment."

CTS Hire is the municipal vehicle rental division of contract hire and fleet management company Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS). CTS offers a wide range of high-quality, FORS, LEZ and DVS compliant vehicles, featuring the latest technological and safety enhancements, supported by a 24/7 national mobile engineer and workshop network.

For more information visit www.ctshire.co.uk.



Teignbridge District Council enters 20th year with SFS

2022 marks the 20th year that Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS) has been vehicle partner to Teignbridge District Council and the council has recently decided to extend the current contract hire arrangement for another three years.

SFS, which was awarded a third consecutive 7-year contract with Teignbridge in 2014 has been providing and maintaining the council's fleet since 2002.

Chris Braines, Waste & Cleansing Manager, Teignbridge District Council: *"We have extended the current contract with SFS whilst we review our strategy on low emission vehicles and decarbonisation of our fleet and workshops. SFS continues to replace and maintain vehicles in our fleet as required. We continue to be impressed with the quality of service, levels of expertise and professional approach from SFS, and we look forward to continuing our excellent working relationship."*

Northampton-based fleet management company SFS was established nearly 30 years ago and is part of the Paragon Banking Group. It offers the complete range of vehicle hire and fleet management services to both the public and private sector, including contract hire, short term vehicle hire, vehicle maintenance, workshop management, technical advice, and consultancy. SFS also runs its own network of workshops across the UK and operates its own specialist vehicle hire division, CTS Hire.

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director, SFS said: *"We have been working with Teignbridge District Council since 2002 and we have provided over 200 vehicles to date. Our priority is to create long-term relationships and we are delighted to have retained Teignbridge for nearly 20 years. As experts in alternative fuel vehicles, we are also able to provide guidance on the adoption of low emissions vehicles to help combat climate change."*

For more information visit www.sfs.co.uk



One in three fleet managers have little to no knowledge of duty of care obligations

*Gavin Davies, General Manager,
Customer Account Management at Alphabet*

New research from Alphabet has revealed a third (33%) of fleet managers have little to no knowledge of corporate duty of care to employees that drive company-owned or leased vehicles.

Less than half (45%) considered themselves very knowledgeable on the topic and while the majority conduct regular driver risk policy reviews (81%), there is still a proportion of businesses

that don't have a driver risk policy in place at all (4%) or haven't reviewed their policy in the last 12 months (15%).

All businesses have a legal duty to actively manage health and safety in the workplace and ensure they have policies and procedures in place to reduce work-related risk to both employees and members of the public. When travelling for business, vehicles are considered a place of work and must be

well-maintained, taxed, insured, hold a current MOT, and be 'fit for purpose. Businesses should also conduct regular driving licence checks, risk assessments, and training to help manage and reduce driver risk. Overlooking aspects of duty of care or not keeping adequate records can have significant legal, financial, and reputational consequences.

When asked about driving training and accident management, encouragingly the vast majority of fleet managers said they have a driver training programme in place (88%). However, 12% of businesses with fleets larger than six vehicles said they did not conduct any form of driver training and a further 10% offered training less than annually, meaning new starters are likely to miss out on vital knowledge. Similarly, while most fleet managers said they keep records of accidents that take place in all vehicles on business travel, rather concerningly, 8% of respondents said they do not record details of accidents involving company vehicles and the figure doubled to 16% for private vehicles.

Alphabet's latest research also found that while 43% of businesses have seen an uplift in the number of employees using private vehicles for business travel post-pandemic, 51% of UK fleet managers still don't consider themselves as having a good understanding of duty of care responsibilities for their 'grey fleet' population. This knowledge gap is further reflected by the fact that nearly a third of fleet managers said their business doesn't have a risk management policy in place that covers all employees, regardless of whether they are driving company or private vehicles.

"If a business requires its employees to use vehicles for work, it's critical fleet managers, drivers, and the wider organisation, understand and mitigate the risks associated with occupational driving. Driver risk must be correctly managed to ensure duty of care and legal obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Road Traffic Act 1988, and the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 are met," commented Gavin Davies, General Manager, Customer Account Management at Alphabet.

"However, our research shows there are some vital gaps when it comes to understanding and meeting duty of care responsibilities when employees are driving on company business. Far too many employers are still unaware that they retain responsibility for their employees' safety and conduct when they're travelling for work purposes, even if they're using their own car. This is particularly concerning given the increase in private vehicle use that 43% of fleets managers have observed since the pandemic, as these vehicles are often older, not as regularly maintained, and much easier to overlook than company vehicles. It's clear fleet managers need to prioritise risk management, whether that's seeking external advice or bringing in an experienced partner to manage the full process for them. A robust and proactive driver risk strategy will not only help businesses better understand and manage potential risk, it can also reduce fleet running costs and downtime."

To help fleet managers feel empowered and identify areas for improvement, Alphabet has shared its 'Driver Risk Essentials checklist' to highlight some of the necessary assessments and measures required to manage the risks of vehicle-related operations.

Driver Risk Essentials checklist:

Complete comprehensive checks regularly

- Driving licence: Ensure all drivers hold a valid UK driving licence for the right category of vehicle they are driving
- Employee audit: Check employees are fit to drive i.e. consider things like eyesight, medical fitness, right to work, accident records, disqualifications or conditions on their licence
- Mileage: Understand how far your drivers are travelling each year and complete risk assessments
- Private vehicle insurance: Make sure drivers using private vehicles are aware of their responsibility to insure their vehicle for business travel, not just commuting

Provide driver training

- Regularly assess drivers and provide training online and in person, as well as practical training where needed
- Review your driver risk policy and ensure all employees are aware of the policy and their own responsibilities to promote a safety-conscious culture

Regular vehicle servicing and maintenance

- Ensure all vehicles used for business travel are roadworthy and fit for purpose to protect drivers, other road users and the environment
- Carry out frequent checks and keep detailed records of insurance, MOT, and road tax, for privately owned vehicles used for work purposes

Good record keeping and retention

- Keep detailed records and signed documentation from drivers. An audit trail will help ensure nothing gets overlooked and evidence appropriate policies and procedures are in place

Gavin Davies, continued: *"We understand the risks associated with fleet management and our comprehensive driver risk management solution is designed to offer customers peace of mind, so they can focus more time on driving their business forward. Our in-house experts are dedicated to making mobility easy for our customers and are on hand to support and offer guidance to fleet managers and drivers, helping them to make informed decisions, and take corrective action when required to ensure all journeys are made in a safe and responsible manner."*



Pictured: Harry Hill from Total Motion, left, and Ben Hyde from Colus

Innovative Hybrid Lease saves Colus £40K in fleet costs

A national utility contractor who thought it would be heavily penalised for an early termination of a multi-vehicle lease contract is instead tens-of-thousands-of-pounds in credit.

Because Colus took out an industry-leading hybrid lease from Total Motion Fleet Management, it received a payment of £42,000 rather than paying a significant break-clause penalty, which it was expecting.

The firm - whose clients include some of the country's biggest water suppliers and civil engineering companies - which still has dozens of vehicles leased through the East Midlands-based fleet management expert, asked to end a lease for 12 vans early.

However, thanks to it being on the

flexible lease scheme - which doesn't charge clients extra for excess mileage or vehicle damage - the vehicles were returned to Total Motion, who then sold the vehicles. The combined sales figure, less the outstanding finance payment, which resulted in Colus being £42,000 in credit.

But had the vans been on a traditional leasing agreement, then Colus would have been facing a large bill - in this case as much as £50,000!

A spokesman for Colus said: "Earlier this year, our business benefitted from Total Motion's hybrid lease when, due to unforeseen circumstances, we had to downsize our fleet quickly; the hybrid lease gave us the flexibility to swiftly action the sale of 12 vehicles and in the process generated a good financial return."

"The process was extremely straight forward and well-handled from start to finish by Harry Hill and his team."

Total Motion Director Simon Hill said: "A decade after launching our innovative hybrid lease, we are still the only leasing company to offer such a deal - one that is really on the side of our clients. There are no hidden costs, it's totally transparent, and on this particular occasion our client was significantly in credit."

"When we launched our flexible leases more than a decade ago, other fleet management companies looked on in bemusement. We are still the only company to offer these flexible leases, and we are delighted to be in a league of our own."

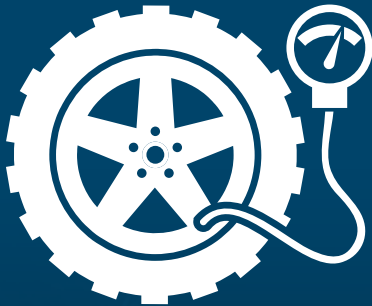
Launched 21 years ago, Total Motion is the largest family run fleet management provider in the UK.

EASY REFERENCE GUIDE

CAR TYRES

CAR TYRES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR KEEPING YOU AND YOUR PASSENGERS SAFE ON THE ROAD. **THE DRIVER** IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TYRE CONDITION.

CHECK YOUR TYRES AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH



AIR PRESSURE

Check your tyres are at the manufacturer's recommended pressure. This may be in the door shut, fuel filler cap or owner's manual



CONDITION

Remove any stones or objects from the tyre's tread. If you spot lumps, bumps or cuts, get your tyres checked by a professional.



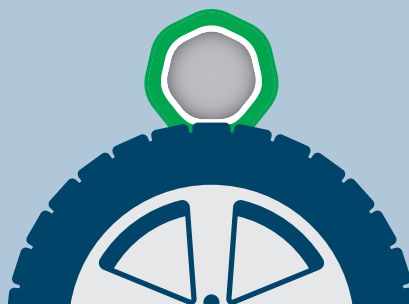
TREAD

The UK legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm across the central three quarters of the tread. Check you're safe with the 20p test below.



Simply place a **20p coin** into the main tread grooves of your tyres.

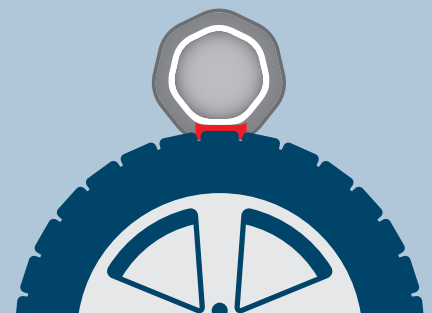
Check at least three locations around each tyre.



If the outer rim of the coin is **obscured**

Your tread depth is above the legal limit.

Stay safe by checking your tyres at least once a month.



If the outer rim of the coin is **VISIBLE**

Your tyres may be illegal and unsafe.

Get them checked immediately by a tyre professional.



MFS EV tyre guide to help Fleet Managers 'supercharge EV tyre knowledge'



Martin Towers, Sales Director,
Micheldever Fleet Solutions (MFS)

Micheldever Fleet Solutions (MFS) is giving Fleet Managers in the utilities and the wider public sector the opportunity to 'supercharge their EV tyre knowledge' with a new EV tyre guide to help them develop their expertise.

MFS - the fleet tyre division of Micheldever Tyre Services, one of the UK's leading tyre wholesalers – says the different tyre requirements for EV vehicles demand a more in-depth tyre knowledge than for conventional vehicles. As a result, MFS has released its 'Supercharging Your Fleet' tyre guide, available as a free download from <https://micheldeverfleet.co.uk/>, to help Fleet Managers "get up to speed" on the key differences.

The EV tyre guide provides a market overview, guidance on the challenges posed by EV vehicles and advice and tips on fitting EV tyres to a company's fleet.

It includes expert guidance on the best tyres to fit to different types of EV vehicles, safety advice, wear rates and tyre replacement cycles.

Martin Towers, MFS Sales Director, said: "The EV market is surging right now, and it will continue that way throughout the year and beyond.

"For those organisations and businesses looking to make the transition to a zero-emission fleet, they need to not only ensure they secure the right vehicles but have the right tyres fitted on them. There is a lot for Fleet Managers to consider and fitting the wrong type of tyre can result in a loss of range, extra noise, accelerated wear and compromise the safety of the vehicle.

"It's therefore really important that Fleet Managers supercharge their EV tyre knowledge and get up to speed on the key differences between EV tyres and those fitted to conventional vehicles.

"We have produced the new MFS EV tyre guide to help Fleet Managers fill in any gaps in their EV tyre knowledge and to support them in developing their position as EV tyre experts within their business."

While 2021 saw the biggest annual increase in EV vehicle registrations, the numbers of EV vehicles coming into fleets are not yet into high numbers, particularly within the utilities sector.

Given though the acceleration in the range of EV models available, those numbers are set to increase, although concerns around range and proven off road capabilities mean that internal combustion engine vehicles (ICE) will remain in use for some time yet.

Martin Towers adds: "We are still really at the embryonic stage of EVs coming onto fleets in high volumes and we know that things such as vehicle conversions that have historically been a well-oiled machine will be more complicated.

"Many of these vehicles will short term have to accept that the ranges won't be the same, but that is no different to the current ICE vehicles. The difference being

that the vehicles already have a reduced range in comparison to ICE vehicles and it is easy for vehicles to carry spare diesel if needed.

"I think short-term many fleets will continue to employ ICE vehicles for these specialist uses. However, at the same time with businesses and organisations keen to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and zero carbon credentials, change will happen. As the numbers of EVs begin to accelerate into fleets, then fleet managers will need to be across the different types of tyre fitments, replacement cycles and other issues associated with EV tyres.

"MFS though is there to help fleet managers respond to these challenges and facilitate a smooth transition of EV vehicles into their fleets."



For honest, unbiased advice on a range of tyre solutions for fleets businesses, please contact: Martin Towers at martin.towers@micheldever.co.uk or 01962 774700.

Why choosing the right tyres for your electric vehicle is so important

Operators who now have Electric Vehicles (EVs) on their fleet need to pay close attention when finding replacement tyres.

The original tyres fitted are usually designed for use on EVs and can be significantly different to the 'normal' tyres fleet operators are familiar with. Fitting the wrong type of tyre could result in loss of range, extra noise, accelerated wear and the risk of failing while being driven, which could result in a serious incident.

Fleet operators should therefore plan maintenance cycles for tyre wear on their EV fleet, this will help to avoid additional and costly down-time and ensure the appropriate tyres are being sourced.

There are a wide range of factors which are important to choosing the right tyre, which the vehicle manufacturer has already taken into account when fitting the originals at the factory. The vehicle's weight is just one as it influences. The amount of air pressure required to keep a tyre in its optimal shape along with the stiffness of its sidewall and even its centre section. EVs are well-known for being heavier than their petrol or

diesel equivalents, so operators must be aware of their tyre's load rating when a replacement are being procured, as well as maintaining the recommended tyre pressure at all times.

Another consideration is the impact tyre choice can have on an EV's range, due to its 'rolling resistance'. A tyre should have the least rolling resistance as possible, however, as always, a balance needs to be struck as grip is essential for safety when it comes to braking. Minimising rolling resistance while providing adequate grip seems like a contradictory requirement but this is a key performance characteristic for EVs to ensure maximum range.

The tyre also needs to be robust as EVs produce maximum power from standing. This places high demands on the rubber compound, which needs to be of the right mixture of components and have the appropriate tread pattern to provide a lifespan comparable with petrol or diesel vehicles.

The amount of noise the tyre produces as it travels over a road surface is yet another example of the possible

adaptations which could make tyres for EVs different to those of a petrol or diesel vehicle. As EV motors produce very little noise, the quiet cabin environment is one of the big attractions of these cars, which could easily be ruined by the wrong choice of tyre.

Stuart Jackson, TyreSafe, Chair, said: "Tyres are an extremely sophisticated pieces of technology, which we all too commonly taken for granted. However, fleet operators must be aware of how different they are and when it's time to replace the original tyres, they need to ensure they are buying the right specification. Choosing a like-for-like tyre will allow owners to enjoy the full benefit of the electric vehicle revolution and reduce the risks of an incident."

For more details visit: www.tyresafe.org



A guide to reading your tyre code?

The markings on tyres follow a universal logic and convey specific information that is very important for comparing products and making decisions about safety.

Once you can decipher the code, you'll have almost all the details about your tyres that you'll need. These markings are

required to meet country/specific regulations and required by law. Your tyre code, which usually has the largest print of all characters on the sidewall of tyres (aside from the tyre and brand name), has seven main components.

The images below show examples.



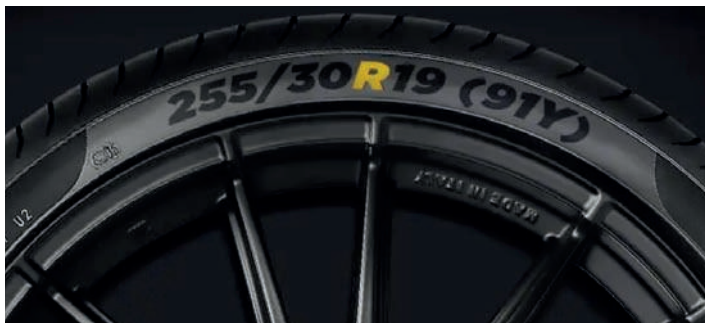
Nominal Tyre Width

The three-digit number immediately following the vehicle type letter(s) tells you how wide your tyre is. This figure is in millimetres and is the nominal measurement from sidewall to sidewall at the tyre's widest point excluding kerbing rib and raised lettering. In this example, the nominal section tyre width is 225mm.



Aspect Ratio

The aspect ratio indirectly tells you how tall your tyre is. It is expressed as a percentage of the tyre's width. In the example code, the aspect ratio is 60, so the tyre's height is 60 per cent of its width.



Internal Construction

The optional letter following the aspect ratio indicates how the body of the tyre is constructed. Standard construction for almost all consumer tyres is radial ply, which is indicated in this example by an R. Other construction types could be B (bias ply) or D (diagonal).



Rim Diameter Code

Following the tyre body construction letter is a two-digit number that tells you the diameter of the rims that the tyre is meant to be mounted on. This measurement is expressed in inches. In this example, the tyre is designed for 16-inch rims.



Load Index

The tyre load index indirectly states how much weight a tyre can bear. This number is not expressed directly in pounds or kilograms or any other unit for measuring weight. It is, rather, a numerical code that can be used along with a standardised reference table to look up the tyre's actual safe load, in pounds, at maximum inflation pressure. In this example, the number 97 means that the tyre can withstand a load of 730KG.

Speed Rating

The tyre's speed rating is also expressed indirectly, this time using a letter code. This letter can be used to look up the maximum speed that the tyre can safely withstand with a fully loaded vehicle (according to its load index rating). In this case, the letter V means that the tyre is rated for sustained speeds up to 149 miles per hour.

Additional information on your tyres

Your tyre's sidewall may also show the maximum air pressure, a traction rating and a treadwear rating, as well as the legally required DOT code, among other information. All of these aspects are explained in more detail below.

DOT code

The DOT tyre date code is a 7 to 13 character code that is legally required and is usually printed in smaller letters near the bead of the tyre (where the tyre meets the rim). Its first letters are DOT, which stands for "Department of Transportation" and indicates that the government agency has approved the tyre. The last four numbers of the DOT code are often the most useful to car owners because they indicate the age of the tyre. The first two digits of the last four numbers tell you the week the tyre was manufactured, and the last two the year. For instance, a tyre with a DOT code of 1119 was manufactured in the 11th week of 2019. This information is important because a tyre's performance and safety diminishes with age, even if the tyre is not used, due to chemical breakdown. Other information included in the DOT code is place of manufacture, size and tyre type.



Source for article and pictures: www.pirelli.com



Tyresafe advice on tread depth

The legal minimum tread depth in the UK is 1.6mm across a continuous band comprising the central three-quarters of the breadth of tread and round its entire circumference.

Without adequate tread depth your tyres may not be able to perform properly in wet conditions, reducing your safety on the road. It is therefore advisable

to consider replacing your tyres well before they reach the legal minimum. Furthermore, drivers whose tyres fail to comply with the minimum tread depth requirements risk a fine of up to £2,500 and three penalty points for each illegal tyre.

Remember to also check the condition your spare tyres. Spare tyres are frequently

of a different size to the standard road tyres and operating restrictions apply. Failure to observe the advice given in the vehicle handbook and/or on the spare wheel or tyre sidewall could have very serious consequences. Do not exceed the recommended maximum speed when using a temporary use spare tyre and observe the minimum inflation pressure.

Fleet maintenance key in cost of living crisis, urges Trakm8



From spiralling energy bills to continually inflated fuel prices, this winter will see British businesses face unprecedented cost pressures.

While businesses will understandably be looking at where they can reduce spend across their operations, Trakm8, the UK's leading vehicle technology solutions provider, is urging those with a fleet division not to scrimp on vehicle maintenance.

Paul Wilson, Sales & Marketing Director at Trakm8 explains: "British businesses are navigating extremely turbulent economic waters at the moment, with both the cost-of-living crisis and continued fuel price uncertainty really starting to bite. Indeed, according to research by The Motor Ombudsman*, worries about financial precarity this winter is leading up to 22% of vehicle owners to delay their service, while 33% are considering missing a service altogether.

"While this might save money in the short term, it could lead to a massive – and unexpected – outlay further down the line if the vehicle fails. This will be exacerbated

among fleet operating-businesses, where costs associated with unexpected vehicle downtime can run into the tens of thousands. And when you consider the fact that businesses are having to run older vehicles for longer thanks to the ongoing parts shortage and delays in sourcing new vehicles, the sector really could be facing a perfect storm this winter.

"One of the surest ways businesses can avoid this is by putting proactive vehicle maintenance at the top of their fleet agenda. While there are obvious considerations such as ensuring vehicles continue to be serviced at regular intervals, businesses should also consider investing in vehicle healthcare solutions that can provide up-to-the-minute diagnostics across a wide range of vehicle datapoints. While investing in technology during a time of increased cost-watching might seem counter intuitive, it's important to consider the wider return on investment such technology can yield. Solutions that monitor vehicle health can help identify potential issues – such as rogue tyres or oil pressure warnings – before they become vehicle disabling and lead to expensive unplanned downtime. At a time when many

fleet vehicles are expected to work harder for longer, such technology can play a pivotal role in keeping fleets moving.

"It is also important to consider the impact of the cost of living crisis on grey fleets. Post-pandemic, we've seen a significant increase in the numbers of employees using their private vehicles for business. This is a notoriously complex area when it comes to servicing, as the onus falls on the motorist and not the business, but it's obviously crucial to ensure these vehicles are being driven safely and in a roadworthy condition.

"For businesses, they should ensure that fleet managers have an up-to-date record of what vehicles each grey fleet employee is driving for work. Where possible, they should also maintain records of the most recent service the vehicle has undertaken, alongside details of any vehicle maintenance checks alongside road tax validity. Far from being a 'Big Brother is watching you' approach, such proactivity ensures both business and driver are on the right side of legislation and helps provide valuable peace of mind that vehicles utilised for business are entirely fit for purpose."



Fuuse enables flexibility scheme to help minimise impact of the energy crisis

Electric vehicle charge point management platform, Fuuse, is enabling businesses to utilise their EV charging assets to help protect the UK's energy supply this winter.

The announcement comes in response to the National Grid's Demand Flexibility Service, launching on 1st November, which incentivises those who can, to reduce their energy consumption at peak times. In a bid to relieve pressure on the grid, Fuuse users who sign up to the scheme will be financially incentivised to turn down their vehicle charging during peak times. These 'demand response' events are expected to happen mainly between the hours of 8am and 10am, and 4pm and 8pm, and could occur any day of the week. All participants will be notified by email the day prior to an event, with the Fuuse platform automatically handling the appropriate EV charging response.

This winter's pilot scheme is due to begin on the 1st of November and run until March 2023, with financial rewards paid to all participants in one lump sum after the scheme ends.

Gary Highton, Head of Energy Services at Fuuse, explains more:

"With the UK potentially facing the first planned power cuts in decades, it is imperative that everyone who can play their part in helping to keep Britain moving supports the scheme. As a business with the innovative solutions and tools in place to facilitate demand response needed for the new Demand Flexibility Service, it is our responsibility to get as many organisations on board as possible. "By enabling our customers to turn down their EV charging during peak demand via the Fuuse platform, we can not only ensure businesses generate revenue from the scheme but facilitate their social responsibilities at a time of unprecedented crisis."

Fuuse's demand-side response solutions are delivered as part of the, soon-to-be released, Fuuse Energy suite, allowing customers to monitor, manage and monetise their EV charging assets. Following the acquisition of energy monitoring and management consultancy, Envisij, earlier this year, the software provider has made plans to bring to market a unique offering, enabling clients to dynamically optimise their energy use and make informed decisions on their core energy infrastructure.

Fuuse is the first software provider in the UK, working exclusively with aggregator Flexitricity, to announce participation in the National Grid's Demand Flexibility Service for commercial EV charging infrastructure. Registration of interest in the scheme is now being taken on the Fuuse website.



The new EQE SUV: high-tech and luxury meet versatility

The EQE SUV is the multi-purpose variant of the EQE executive saloon and is one of the most spacious representatives of its class. It can achieve WLTP ranges of up to 590 kilometres and has a whole host of driving assistance systems.

The general standard equipment of the EQE SUV includes ATTENTION ASSIST, Active Brake Assist, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Parking Package with reversing camera and Speed Limit Assist.

Due to the comparatively short wheelbase of 3030 millimetres and the corresponding suspension tuning, it feels particularly agile and manoeuvrable even with the basic set-up. To increase ground clearance, the vehicle level can be raised by up to 30 millimetres, the EQE SUV models with 4MATIC also boast the OFFROAD program for off-road driving. A rear axle steering system with a maximum steering angle of 10 degrees is available as an option.

With adaptive software, the MBUX display and operating system makes personalised suggestions for numerous infotainment, comfort and vehicle functions. A highlight of the interior is the optional MBUX Hyperscreen. With the zero-layer design, the user does not have to scroll through submenus or



give voice commands. Situational and contextual applications are offered at the top level in the field of view. With the MBUX Hyperscreen (optional extra), three displays merge almost seamlessly into one another to create a screen band over 141 centimetres wide. The front passenger in the EQE SUV has the option of a 12.3-inch OLED display with its own user interface. The system uses an intelligent, camera-based blocking logic that recognises if the driver is looking toward the front passenger display. If this is the case, the system automatically dims the dynamic content for security reasons.

The EQE SUV features a sophisticated thermal architecture with a heat pump as standard. This makes the system work very efficiently: the waste heat from the electric drive (inverter and electric motor) and also the high-voltage battery can be used to heat the interior. This reduces drastically the draw on battery power for the heating system, thus increasing the range. Another pleasant and efficient function is pre-entry climate control. The THERMATIC automatic climate control



system with two climate zones is fitted as standard, while the THERMOTRONIC with four zones is available as an option. DIGITAL LIGHT headlamp technology (special equipment) makes innovative functions possible, such as the projection of auxiliary markings or warning symbols onto the road. Another equipment highlight is ENERGIZING AIR CONTROL Plus. A HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter cleans the incoming outside air at its very high filtration level. ENERGIZING COMFORT links together various comfort systems in the vehicle. The individual ENERGIZING COMFORT programmes enable a special feel-good programme depending on the mood or needs of the customer. This enhances physical comfort and performance while driving and during a break. The Dolby Atmos sound format takes the

audio experience in the EQE SUV to a new level.

The principles of Integral Safety apply regardless of the type of drive system. Like all other Mercedes-Benz models, the EQS SUV therefore has a rigid passenger compartment, special deformation zones and state-of-the-art restraint systems. The European version of the EQE SUV can detect whether the rear seats are actually occupied. If a passenger in the rear is not wearing a seat belt, the driver receives a specific warning. The so-called occupant presence reminder can indicate children who may have been overlooked in the rear of the vehicle. |

Production of the EQE SUV will start in December, with deliveries expected in late Spring 2023.

New two-model Kia Soul EV line-up



Kia has revealed UK specifications for the 2023 model year Soul EV line-up, as order books open for the newly upgraded model.

The Manufacturer is widening customer appeal with the availability of a revised, two-grade model tier structure. A new 'Urban' specification joins the 'Explore' grade to offer buyers a choice of highly equipped and distinctively styled models.

For the first time in the UK, Kia is offering a 39.2kWh battery pack in the Soul EV 'Urban', with a maximum (WLTP Combined) range of 171 miles, or up to 252 miles in a city setting. Charging 0-80 per cent takes just under an hour using an 80kW rapid charger. Using a 7.2kW home charger, full charge can be achieved in just over 6 hours. The car is powered by a 100kW (134bhp) electric motor, producing a maximum torque of 395Nm. The 'Urban' model is mated to a single-speed automatic transmission and can achieve a top speed of 97mph, with a 0-62mph acceleration figure of 9.9 seconds.

The anticipated best-seller in the line-up is the 64kWh 'Explore' grade, featuring SUV-inspired design cues. With a (WLTP Combined) driving range of 280 miles, up to 402 miles is possible when driven in the city, making the best use of the Soul EV's flexible regenerative braking system that can be altered using the steering wheel-mounted paddle shifters. This grade is powered by a 150kW (201bhp) electric motor with a maximum torque of 395Nm, enabling a top speed of 104mph, with a 7.9 second acceleration dash from 0-62mph.

The first tier 'Urban' grade specification includes, 17-inch alloy wheels, Dual full LED headlamps, 8.0-inch touchscreen infotainment with Android Auto™ and Apple CarPlay™, and 7.0-inch OLED colour driver instrument cluster, USB sockets front and rear, a raft of safety devices including Forward Collision-Avoidance Assist, Cloth upholstery and reversing camera. The 2nd tier Explore adds, black leather upholstery, heated front seats and steering wheel, satin chrome interior door

handles, privacy glass, the full spec on both versions can be found online.

The Soul EV has always been offered with a selection of eye-catching colour options, and these latest models are no different. 'Urban' models come with a mono-tone livery as standard, with the option of metallic paint, with 'Explore' editions available with optional two-tone metallic paint.

Much more to come

The Soul EV is the smallest of Kia UK's current three battery electric vehicle line-up, joined by the recently launched all-new Niro EV and the sensational EV6 flagship. In 2023, the production version of the EV9 will expand the trio and will become the largest battery electric vehicle yet in Kia's exciting plans to launch 14 EV models by 2027 globally. 10 of the vehicles will be built on the new Electric-Global Modular Platform (E-GMP) architecture, and four derivative EVs will be based on other models.



New Citroën C5 Aircross

New C5 Aircross has been updated with a new front-end design and a more angular design for the rear light clusters.

The model comes – as standard – with Citroën Advanced Comfort® Suspension, latest-generation Citroën Advanced Comfort® Seats and an interior layout with unparalleled cabin space. On selected versions, the Advanced Comfort® Seats come with a six-way electric adjustment to help you find the ideal seating position.

New Citroën C5 Aircross comes equipped with a 12.3-inch digital driver's display and a new 10-inch high-definition touchscreen that is positioned higher up on the dashboard to ensure the driver keeps their eyes on the road.

Three trim levels are available, 'Sense Plus', 'Shine' and 'C-Series Edition'.

PureTech petrol and BlueHDi diesel 130hp internal combustion engines are available across the range, paired with either a six-speed manual or an eight-speed EAT8 automatic gearbox. 'Shine' and 'C-Series Edition' models are also available with a Plug-in Hybrid drivetrain that combines a 180hp petrol engine, an 80kW electric motor and an eight-speed electrified auto gearbox – delivering 225hp and up to 38 miles of electric-only range (EAER WLTP Combined). With emissions as low as 32g/km CO₂, New C5 Aircross Plug-in Hybrid versions qualify a Benefit-in-Kind (BIK) tax rate of just 12% – making them ideal for fleets, businesses and user choosers.



SsangYong introduces new Rexton Ultimate Plus

SsangYong Motors UK has announced the introduction of the new Rexton Ultimate Plus model to its award-winning line up.

As with all Rexton variants, the Ultimate Plus retains all the qualities, space, and capabilities of a traditional SUV whilst enjoying the same eye-catching, powerful design that serves as a solid foundation for its superior ride and handling dynamics, as well as a 3.5 tonne towing capacity.

On the outside, the new variant boasts 20" alloy wheels, programmable auto-dipping mirrors, and a power sunroof as standard. Metallic paint is included in the OTR price and is available in Ice White, Space Black and Marble Grey.

On the inside, the Rexton Ultimate Plus impresses further with a new quilted premium nappa leather and suede seat, 3D 360° monitoring camera, driver's seat memory function, third-row seat air-conditioning, wireless phone charger and rear passenger door sunblinds.

In a nutshell, the top-spec Rexton Ultimate Plus, offers passenger convenience, safety, comfort, and peace of mind with its industry-leading 7-year/ 150,000-mile warranty.

"In the UK, the SsangYong Rexton has set new standards and challenged its SUV competitors over the past few years with its value for money proposition. This new Ultimate plus adds another trim level with even more luxury and spec, and yet still retains the excellent value for money position. With today's cost of living issues, we will continue to challenge the market in terms of value and continue to offer a comprehensive 7-year/150,000-mile warranty, so customers can be confident that they have made the right choice when it comes to the things that really matter."

Kevin Griffin, managing director of SsangYong Motors UK



Toyota out in force at The Emergency Services Show

Toyota made a strong appearance at this year's Emergency Services Show held from the 21st – 22nd September, NEC Birmingham) with a range of models equipped to meet the demands of police, fire and ambulance services.

The event is the UK's leading showcase for the blue light sector, bringing together service providers and related businesses to demonstrate new operational solutions, products and technology innovations with a programme of live demonstrations and seminars.

Toyota had on display vehicles that are currently in use by the three principal emergency services.

The Corolla Touring Sports hybrid electric estate car is manufactured at the company's Burnaston plant in Derbyshire and is modified to meet the requirements for police use by the new Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) unit at the factory.

This one-stop-shop service makes for a seamless process once the car comes

off the assembly line, saving time for the customer.

The Hilux Double Cab with all-wheel drive is a fully operational and liveried fire appliance currently used by the West Yorkshire Fire Service watch managers. It is designed to carry primary first aid and safety equipment and to provide fast response to emergencies alongside fire engines. If arriving first on the scene, the watch managers are able to brief the emergency crews on the real-time situation, enabling a speedy and focused response. The Toyota Hilux has established a global reputation for exceptional durability and reliability and its ability to operate in the toughest environments. These qualities have made it a popular choice for aid agencies worldwide.

The third model on show was a RAV4 plug-in hybrid electric SUV, used by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust as a rapid response vehicle across Wales. The Toyota has proved a top choice for the service, which purchased 50 hybrid

models in 2020 and has since added a further 30 plug-in hybrid versions to its fleet, further reducing its vehicle emissions. The plug-in system enables around 46 miles of all-electric, zero emission driving; once the battery is depleted, the RAV4 then automatically switches to efficient self-charging hybrid running. Other benefits include intelligent all-wheel drive (AWD-i) for secure performance in slippery conditions and ample load space to carry essential medical kit.

Neil Broad, General Manager One Toyota Fleet, said: *"The use of our vehicles by the emergency services is the best possible validation of the quality and reliability of the Toyota brand. The addition of the SVO unit at Burnaston will deliver greater efficiencies in the longer term as we look to increase the scope of our customisation work. With models in day-to-day use by each of the principal emergency services, we are also well-placed to inform potential customers about their real-world performance and benefits."*

SEPTEMBER 2022

NEW LCV REGISTRATIONS
TOTAL: 34,950 **+10.8%**
 YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE



PICKUPs

3,863



-13.7%

4X4s

536



17.8%

VANS <=2.0t

1,016



-21.5%

Vans >2.0-2.5t

3,748



40.8%

Vans >2.5-3.5t

25,787



13.9%

Rigids >3.5-6.0t

486



-23.9%

YEAR-ON-YEAR CHANGE



September plate change sees first growth for British van market in 2022

Britain's light commercial vehicle (LCV) market grew by 10.8% to 34,950 units in September, one of the most popular months of the year for new van registrations due to the plate change.

Despite strong order books throughout 2022, September is the first month of growth in registrations this year, as supply disruptions have restricted model availability. The performance is, however, artificially inflated in comparison with 2021, which saw the fewest registrations for the month since the 2009 recession, with this September still some -35.5% below the five-year pre-pandemic average.

The year-on-year uptick was driven by the fulfilment of orders for vans weighing more than 2.5 tonnes, up 13.9% to represent 73.8% of the market, while registrations of vans weighing more than 2.0 tonnes to 2.5 tonnes

rose by 40.8%. However, vans weighing less than or equal to 2.0 tonnes were down -21.5%.

Battery electric vehicle (BEV) deliveries, meanwhile, continued their upward trend, rising 70.0% to a market share of 4.4% – up from 2.9% in 2021. With a growing number of zero emission van models coming to market, more operators are benefitting from lower taxation, purchase incentives and zone charge exemptions. As a result, BEV volumes increased by 52.9% year on year from January to September.

Overall, however, UK van registrations during 2022 to date are down -20.1% year on year at 213,576 units, and some -24.8% below the pre-pandemic five-year average,³ despite strong order books for the latest LCV models. While there are signs that pandemic-related component shortages are starting to ease for some manufacturers, supply issues continue to stymie the market, while economic headwinds add further pressures on recovery. Measures that address the UK's economic sluggishness and boost operator confidence will be crucial to stimulating the demand needed to help transition the van market to a zero emission future.

While the full recovery of Britain's new van market remains some way off, September growth reflects van makers' efforts to fulfil strong order books despite a paucity of supply. High energy costs and wider economic uncertainty, however, will undermine operator confidence, meaning that long-term measures to provide stability and growth are needed if the sector – so often a bellwether for business activity – is to return to its past success.

**Mike Hawes, SMMT
 Chief Executive**



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