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ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

For fleet professionals operating within the Public Sector, Housing, Utilities and Infrastructure Management

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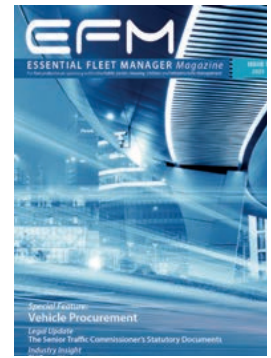
Special Feature: **Vehicle Procurement**

Legal Update
The Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Documents

Industry Insight
EV Transition

Essential Fleet Manager - Issue 7 (2025)

The publication for fleet professionals that operate vehicle fleets that support the UK's Essential Services sector.



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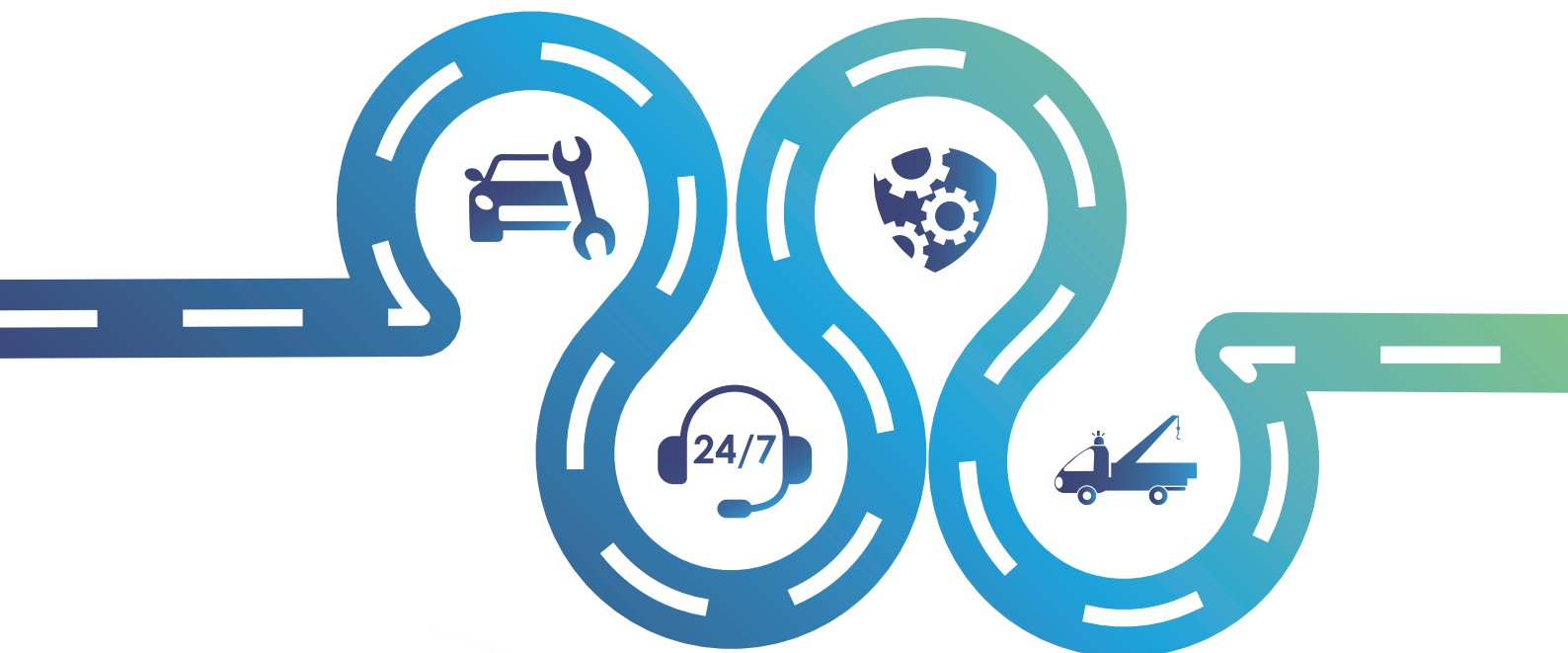
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The Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Documents

Richard Pelly, Director, Pellys Transport & Regulatory Law

The Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Guidance

In September's edition of the Magazine I reviewed the consultation process relating to the latest proposed amendments to the Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Guidance Document relating to vocational drivers. Doing so reminded me of the value of these Statutory Guidance Documents ('the Stat Docs') and the importance to operators, nominated transport managers and other professionals – including vocational drivers – involved in the operation and driving of large commercial vehicles (whether HGV or PSV) of being aware of their existence and far more usefully knowing of their actual content.

Emphasising the importance of the Stat Docs the Senior Traffic Commissioner made reference to them towards the beginning of his valedictory forward to the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain: Annual Report to the Secretary of State 2024-2025 in which he said –

As the "Guide to Judicial Conduct" explains, fair treatment does not mean treating everyone in the same way: it means treating people equally in comparable situations. When parties do not get the outcome they would like or expect, it is particularly important that they feel they were fairly treated, fully heard and fully understood. It is

with that aim in mind that I have continued to maintain the statutory guidance and statutory directions and to professionalise the jurisdiction. It is of some relief to finally see that reflected in consolidated reference material for OTC staff, for which I have worked so hard.

So, the approach is not to treat operators as children. We recognise the complicated nature of transport businesses but also that those undertakings accept the basic obligations of an operator's licence or as a transport manager when the application is made. GB's achievements in road safety are underpinned by those obligations. Where there is evidence of non-compliance Traffic Commissioners provide a specialist tribunal which balances the interests of the party, against protecting the public and wider industry from unfair practices.

The Annual Report itself begins with a section entitled 'Our purpose' which is followed by a list of the traffic commissioners' functions which includes at the top of the list –

"Publishing guidance and directions regarding the operator licensing regime and tribunal activities."

There are two reasons why operators and nominated transport managers should ensure that they are familiar with the Stat Docs: firstly, they are

expected to be aware of them by the Traffic Commissioners before whom they may be required to appear, and secondly they are a legal mine of useful information that is regularly updated to reflect developments in the law which are directly relevant to the industry and the way in which it is regulated. To quote the famous American jurist, Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, "the law is nothing more than a prediction of what judges will in fact do".

Having an understanding of the ways in which traffic commissioners expect operators and nominated transport managers to conduct themselves and their professional business enables them to view the way in which they operate their commercial vehicles from the perspective of those to whom they may one day need to answer in person. The operator's licensing regime relies on trust. Having a meaningful insight into what this actually means makes it less likely – not more so – that one will ever have to face a traffic commissioner in a public inquiry.

The 15 Stat Docs are listed in the table (1) and the latest editions can be sourced here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/senior-traffic-commissioners-statutory-guidance-and-statutory-directions>:

Table (1)

Stat Doc Number	Stat Doc Title
0	Introduction to operator licensing, the statutory guidance and statutory directions
1	Good repute and Fitness
2	Finance
3	Transport Managers
4	Operating centres, stable establishments & addresses for service
5	Legal Entities
6	Vocational Driver Conduct
7	Impounding
8	Delegation of Authority
9	Case Management
10	The principles of decision making and the concept of proportionality
11	Format of Decisions
12	Appeals
13	PSV Operations including small vehicles, limousines and novelty vehicles
14	Local bus services in England (outside London) and Wales

When would-be operators apply for their operator's licences they are required to sign and date the application. When doing so they are required to confirm that the information contained in the application is true *and* they are required to promise to comply with a list of undertakings designed to ensure that lawful and safe operation of any vehicles that are operated under the operator's licence should it be granted. A failure to sign the application will result in the application being refused; not simply because the applicant has '**forgotten** to sign the form' but because the applicant has **failed** to make the necessary promises of future compliance, without which no traffic commissioner will be willing to grant the licence. The promises of future compliance – and the trust relied upon by the traffic commissioners that the promises will be kept – are the foundations upon which operator's licences are granted.

It is trite, but nevertheless fundamental, to observe that for these promises of future compliance to be meaningful applicants must actually know what it is that they are promising. So by way of example a promise to ensure that the drivers' hours and record keeping rules will be complied with, requires that whomever makes this promise actually knows which rules apply (EU retained legislation and / or UK domestic) to which aspects of their operation, and applicants must know what records are required to be held (drivers' hours and where applicable road transport working time) and for how long those records are required to be kept.

Put another way, how can one promise to comply with rules about which one is unaware? It calls to mind former US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's much quoted observation that "*There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know*

we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know."

In so far as the Stat Docs are concerned, the challenge for transport professionals will be to find the time to make sense of them and thereafter stay up to date with the development of these documents over time. Advice in articles such as this one to 'read them' is likely to be as unhelpful as it is on point!

The Stat Docs can be divided into two broad categories. Stat Docs in the first category are concerned with the essentials of operator licensing, in particular : Stat Docs 0-6, (as well as 13 & 14 for PSV operators). Stat Docs in the second category are concerned with the way in which the functions of the office of the traffic commissioner are conducted, especially in relation to public inquiries, for which see Stat Docs 7-12.

...Cont'd on page 6 ▼



...Cont'd from page 5▲

Whenever one needs to consult a Stat Doc the government website is a good starting point – saving the PDF for a particular Stat Doc to your computer system so that you can refer to it in future can be helpful, but it is important to make sure that you are referring to the most up to date edition; see for example Stat Doc 3 – Transport Managers https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67ea839f0678ace40a7f2770/Stat_Doc_3_Transport_Managers_-_Version_17.0.pdf which was published in March 2025 and is currently at Version 17 (and as an aside, see paragraph 24 which starts by stating “Continuous and effective responsibility means just that. An applicant or operator can be taken to be aware of the various guidance documents issued on behalf of the Senior Traffic Commissioner”).

As appeal cases are issued and as the law changes which it does over time, the Stat Docs are designed to keep pace, calling to mind a different eminent jurist and senior judge, Lord Denning, who stated “If we never do anything which has not been done before, we shall never get anywhere. The law will stand still whilst the rest of the world goes on; and that will be

bad for both.”

The fundamentals of an effective compliance regime are simple (but not easy). Know the law and understand its purpose. Have systems in place that enable you to achieve compliance. Record the operation of the systems. Make certain to check that the systems remain effective. Record the checks. It is no accident that ‘know the law and understand its purpose’ comes first and the Stat Docs provide a valuable framework within which to understand what is expected.

Taken together the Stat Docs run to many hundreds of pages, and an expectation that operators and transport managers are taken to know the content is not the same as expecting that all the information contained in them must be memorised. The road transport regime is a practical jurisdiction. Its practitioners must operate in the real world – a world in which there are many operational and commercial challenges which involve many competing pressures on one’s time every day. So a balance must be struck.

What works well as a starting point is to produce a table similar to the one above, but with a final column entitled

‘date reviewed’. Diarise to look at 1 or 2 Stat Docs each calendar month. Allocate 15 minutes for each review. For the review itself start with a ‘page turn’ on screen. Scroll through the document page by page at a speed that enables you to ‘review’ the whole of the Stat Doc in no more than 5 minutes. As you go, make a note of any topics that catch your eye. Use the remaining 10 minutes to go back to the topics that you have identified and spend a little time reading into them. It may well be that from time to time a topic will justify further study and if it does then further time should be allocated. Over time the cumulative benefit of reviewing and then returning to the Stat Docs will likely be of genuine benefit (certainly enough to justify the time spent engaged in these regular reviews). This approach does not offer a miracle cure – and the same approach will work well when keeping up to date with the DVSA’s Guide to Maintaining Roadworthiness or relevant health & safety publications – but following it enables operators, transport managers and HGV & PSV drivers to take advantage of a resource that has been years in the making, is made available free of charge and with which they are expected to be familiar in any event.●

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Strategic Fleet Procurement: Balancing Cost, Value and Sustainability

Fleet procurement is far more than acquiring vehicles, parts, or maintenance services at the lowest price. For managers overseeing critical infrastructure, public safety, or community support fleets, procurement decisions must balance cost with performance, reliability, resilience, and sustainability. With tighter budgets and decarbonisation targets, prioritising long-term value over short-term savings is key to operational excellence.

Selecting the Right Vehicle

Choosing the right vehicle specification is essential. Under-specifying a vehicle can increase downtime and premature wear, while over-specifying may result in unnecessary capital expenditure and higher operating costs. Fleet managers must understand each vehicle's operational profile, including payload, mileage, terrain requirements (such as off-road capability), and usage patterns, before making procurement decisions.

Engaging drivers and operational staff is equally important. Gathering feedback on current vehicle performance helps identify issues that need addressing and ensures procurement decisions are fit for

purpose, support operational efficiency, and maintain effective service provision.

Value Over Cost

Downtime in Essential Service fleets isn't just inconvenient—it can disrupt critical operations. Procurement decisions should focus on sourcing vehicles and service partners that deliver consistent, reliable performance. Selecting solely on price risks serious consequences: a vehicle breakdown during an emergency or peak period can disrupt service, incur costly repairs, and damage organisational reputation.

Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

Calculate TCO across a vehicle's lifecycle, including purchase price, depreciation, fuel, insurance, taxes, and maintenance. As hybrid and electric light commercial vehicles (eLCVs) become more common, also consider charging infrastructure, electricity tariffs, and anticipated residual values—particularly for vehicles new to the market.

Sustainability

Low-emission and electric vehicles contribute to ESG and net-zero targets, reduce operating costs, and enhance efficiency. A total-value approach ensures compliance with environmental

goals without compromising operational delivery.

Strategic Procurement Practices

Fleet procurement involves complex supply chains and long-term commitments. Managers should adopt a structured, data-driven approach to reduce risk and maximise efficiency:

- **Customised Strategies:** Tailor procurement approaches for each vehicle type and associated services. Align strategies with operational and sustainability objectives to build long-term resilience.
- **Risk and Value Classification:** Classify products and services by strategic importance and risk, allocating more resources to high-value, high-risk items while streamlining lower-risk purchases.
- **Strategic Supplier Partnerships:** Develop long-term relationships with OEMs, telematics providers, and service partners. Focus on suppliers who consistently deliver high-quality products and reliable service, as these partnerships directly impact fleet performance.
- **Data-Led Decision Making:** Use operational data, such as vehicle



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usage, maintenance records, and telematics insights, to optimise specifications, maintenance schedules, and technology investments, ensuring fleets remain efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective.

Partnership Approach

Strong supplier relationships can mean the difference between reliable performance and costly downtime. Procurement managers should:

- **Engage Early:** Involve suppliers in planning and specification to ensure solutions meet operational needs.
- **Be Transparent:** Share operational challenges, from seasonal peaks to electrification goals, so suppliers can provide proactive solutions.
- **Maintain Ongoing Dialogue:** Conduct regular performance reviews and share data to identify issues early and drive continuous improvement.

Transparent partnerships foster innovation, uptime, and resource availability, enabling fleets to respond effectively in all operational scenarios.

Measuring Procurement Success

Procurement outcomes should focus on performance, cost control, and sustainability.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) for fleet managers include:

- Vehicle uptime and response times.
- Cost per vehicle or operational hour.
- CO₂ and emissions reductions.
- Supplier-led innovation and efficiency gains.

Aligning KPIs with operational impact ensures procurement decisions deliver tangible benefits for service delivery, budgets, and environmental performance.

Conclusion

For fleet and procurement managers, success isn't about securing the lowest price—it's about ensuring the right assets, partners, and strategies are in place to support operational excellence. By adopting structured procurement frameworks, prioritising total lifecycle value, and fostering long-term supplier partnerships, managers can achieve reliable, cost-efficient, and sustainable fleets prepared to meet both current and future operational challenges. ●



East Kent Recycling Strengthens Fleet with 23 New Volvo Trucks

Dover-based East Kent Recycling has expanded its fleet with 23 new Volvo trucks, in a major mixed-model order that highlights the manufacturer's versatility across its range. The new arrivals – a combination of FL, FE and FMX models – will support the company's busy construction, demolition and waste management operations across Kent.

Supplied by MC Truck & Bus, the order includes 10 FL 4x2 and eight FE 4x2 skiploaders, four FMX 8x4 hookloaders, and one FMX 6x2 tractor unit. With these additions, Volvo now represents 25 of the company's 26-strong commercial vehicle fleet.

"We've always valued Volvo Trucks for their reliability and build quality," says Ky Campion, Director at East Kent Recycling. "When it came to refreshing our fleet, Volvo stood out as the clear choice. The mix of models fits our operational needs perfectly, and having the reassurance of Volvo's nationwide support network is a huge benefit."

The FL and FE skiploaders are powered by Volvo's DK8 engines, producing 280 hp and 350 hp, respectively. The FEs are paired with 12-speed I-Shift automated transmissions for seamless shifting and optimal fuel efficiency. The FMX range also benefits from I-Shift, with the tractor unit equipped with a 540 hp engine, and the hookloaders – all featuring Hiab Multilift bodywork – split evenly between 420 hp and 460 hp D13K powertrains.

The rigid trucks will be deployed on

construction and demolition work, while the FMX tractor unit will haul waste between East Kent Recycling's plants in Faversham and Tilmanstone.

Notably, the company's new skiploaders are the first in the UK to receive formal approval from both the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to double-stack full skips. This innovation – achieved through cross chains installed between the skip arms on Boughton bodywork – delivers significant operational gains.

"We worked closely with the HSE and DVSA to develop and approve this system," explains Campion. "Being able to legally carry two full skips at once means fewer trips, lower fuel use and faster turnaround times for our clients. The ability to adapt the FL and FE models to meet this requirement was a major factor in choosing Volvo."

All 23 new trucks are covered by a five-year Volvo Gold Contract, providing full preventive maintenance and repair to maximise uptime and service continuity. Each vehicle is expected to clock between 60,000 and 80,000 kilometres annually on a five-day operating schedule.

With more than 45 years' experience, East Kent Recycling is a leading independent waste management business serving both commercial and household customers across Kent. Through its two recycling centres, the company processes more than 250,000 tonnes of waste every year. ●

The Procurement Act 2023: What Public Sector Fleet Managers Need to Know

The Procurement Act 2023 is a significant piece of UK legislation that has transformed how public sector organisations, including councils, NHS trusts, emergency services, and government departments—purchase goods, services, and works. Replacing the EU-derived procurement regulations (Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016, etc.), the Act introduces a simpler, more flexible, and UK-specific system.

What is the Procurement Act 2023?

The Act creates a structured and adaptable framework for public sector

procurement, regulating how public funds are spent. Its goals are to:

- Simplify procurement rules and procedures.
- Increase transparency and accountability.
- Promote value for money and sustainability.
- Support innovation and SME participation.
- Ensure suppliers meet ethical and performance standards.

When Did It Come Into Force?

The Act received Royal Assent in October

2023 and came into effect on 24 February 2025.

- Contracts advertised **before this date** continue under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- Contracts advertised **after this date** are governed by the new Procurement Act 2023 framework.

Why Was It Introduced?

Following Brexit, the UK was no longer bound by EU procurement directives, creating an opportunity to streamline a previously complex and bureaucratic system. The government aimed to:

- Create a single UK framework instead

of four separate sets of rules.

- Encourage innovation and flexibility in contract awards.
- Strengthen oversight of supplier performance and eliminate poor performers.

This initiative forms part of the government's "Transforming Public Procurement" programme, led by the Cabinet Office.

Key Changes Under the Act

1) Simplified Procedures

There are now two main procurement routes:

- **Open Procedure:** Standard competitive tendering.
- **Competitive Flexible Procedure:** Allows negotiation, trials, and iterative design, ideal for complex procurements like EV fleets or specialised vehicle fit-outs.

This simplification offers buyers greater freedom to tailor processes.

2) Focus on Value Over Price

Authorities must now consider the "most advantageous tender", giving weight to:

- Whole-life costs.
- Quality and reliability.
- Environmental impact.
- Social value and innovation.

Encouraging long-term, sustainable procurement decisions.

3) Stronger Supplier Exclusion Powers

- Authorities can exclude suppliers for poor performance, unethical behaviour, or security risks.
- A central Debarment List ensures consistency across the public sector.

4) Central Digital Platform (CDP)

- A national digital portal hosts all contract notices, supplier data, and award information.
- Suppliers register once and reuse their data across tenders, reducing administration and increasing transparency.

5) Increased SME Access

- Authorities must remove barriers preventing SMEs from bidding.
- Contracts can be divided into "lots" to enable smaller suppliers to compete.

6) Greater Transparency

- Authorities must publish more information throughout the procurement lifecycle, from planning to completion.
- This boosts public trust and allows scrutiny of taxpayer spending.

7) Contract Management and Modifications

- Clarifies when contracts can be modified or extended without re-tendering.
- Only non-substantial changes are permitted without a new competition, which is important for long-term vehicle or maintenance contracts.

Implications for Fleet and Vehicle Procurement

For public sector fleet teams, the Procurement Act 2023 introduces:

- Flexibility to run vehicle trials, demonstrations, or phased rollouts.
- Easier engagement with SMEs and local specialists.
- Greater focus on whole-life value, including fuel, maintenance, and emissions.
- Stronger supplier performance monitoring and compliance requirements.
- Increased transparency and scrutiny over tender outcomes.

Choosing the Right Fleet Procurement Procedure

Open Procedure:

- Best for standard vehicles, replacement vans, and simple maintenance contracts.
- Simple, competitive, and transparent.

Competitive Flexible Procedure:

- Ideal for complex projects, electric vehicles, custom fit-outs, telematics systems, or phased fleet replacements.
- Supports negotiation, trials, and supplier innovation.

By understanding these changes, public sector fleet managers can optimise procurement decisions, balancing compliance, operational efficiency, value, and sustainability while embracing innovation and supporting local suppliers. ●

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Westmorland and Furness Council Approves Ambitious Fleet Decarbonisation and Replacement Strategy

Westmorland and Furness Council has approved its Fleet Decarbonisation and Replacement Strategy 2025–2035, marking a major step forward in its commitment to achieving carbon net zero.

The strategy sets out how the Council will decarbonise its fleet of around 390 vehicles over the next decade, aligning with the UK Government's roadmap to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles.

Currently, the Council's fleet produces greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to around 1,400 cars, with 84% of emissions generated by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and light commercial vehicles (LCVs). The new strategy provides a clear pathway to reduce emissions by 74%, combining the introduction of electric vehicles with a transition to renewable fuels.

Cllr Peter Thornton, Cabinet Member for Highways and ICT, said:

"This strategy represents a significant investment in the future of Westmorland and Furness. By moving to cleaner, more

efficient vehicles, we are not only reducing harmful emissions but also playing our part in addressing the climate emergency. The strategy demonstrates how local government can lead by example, using innovation and forward planning to deliver practical and affordable solutions to a global challenge."

The strategy was developed with independent consultancy Cenex, which conducted a comprehensive review of the fleet, supporting infrastructure, and available decarbonisation options. The review confirmed that battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) offer the most viable solutions for large-scale deployment across the Council's diverse operations.

Key Milestones in the Decarbonisation Pathway

13% emissions reduction through the introduction of the first 90 electric cars and vans, along with two electric refuse collection vehicles and two electric minibuses.

61% emissions reduction by transitioning remaining HGVs and minibuses to HVO

fuel as an interim measure.

Long-term ambition for the entire fleet to operate as zero-emission vehicles powered by renewable electricity.

The approved strategy also outlines the financial investment required to deliver this transformation. Over the next decade, capital expenditure is forecast at £26.16 million, with £5.23 million required within the first five years. Annual running costs are expected to reach £2.24 million, representing a substantial but essential investment to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and support long-term savings through lower fuel and maintenance costs.

Cllr Giles Archibald, Cabinet Member for Climate, Biodiversity and Environmental Services, said:

"Our Council Plan commits us to becoming carbon net zero, and this strategy delivers on that promise. As one of the largest and most rural local authorities in England, we face unique challenges, but with this strategy we are confident we can build a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable future for our residents."●

Rushcliffe Council Rolls Out Greener HVO Vehicles for Dog Warden and Pest Control Teams

Rushcliffe Borough Council's dog warden and pest control teams are now using new hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) vans, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by around 90% compared with their previous diesel vehicles.

The vans, which will travel thousands of miles each year, are part of the council's wider initiative to make its fleet greener. Across the Council's waste and Streetwise

functions, 57 of 69 frontline vehicles have now switched to either HVO or electric power, as Rushcliffe works toward its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

HVO is a diesel-quality fuel produced from waste oils and fats, offering reduced nitrous oxide emissions and long-term storage stability, making it a complete replacement for conventional diesel.

Rushcliffe's dog wardens care for dozens of lost and stray dogs each year while educating owners on responsible pet ownership. The council's environmental health service provides pest control treatments for wasps, mice, fleas, and more. Services can be booked via the council's website.

Cllr Rob Inglis, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, said:

"It's great to see more of our vehicle fleet moving to fully carbon-smart alternatives with the successful rollout of HVO and electric vehicles. These changes are essential as we continue to reduce the environmental impact of our operations."

Currently, the frontline fleet includes 51 HVO and six electric vehicles, with further conversions planned. Cllr Inglis added that HVO offers a practical, greener option while the council continues to explore electric vehicle solutions, particularly considering the challenges of rural routes, charging infrastructure, and costs.●

"The team are enjoying using the new

Procuring Fleet Isn't a Commodity Purchase



But too often fleet is viewed this way. As a result, the focus is on 'nailing' the best price with service levels often taking second place says Simon Staton, client management director of Venson Automotive Solutions.



In the complex world of fleet, it's critical for businesses to understand clearly what is being procured, how the service will manifest itself during the in-life period, and the performance standards and processes that will measure quality, driver satisfaction, competence, price and other issues.

So how do you decide on which aspects of your existing fleet management activities you want to outsource?

- Do you have an experienced/dedicated in-house fleet team?
- Are you getting the management information you need to understand the actual cost of your fleet?
- How frequently do you have vehicles unavailable, what's the impact and cost to your business?
- Who manages the legal and taxation issues related to your fleet?
- Do you have to manage multiple suppliers so that you can keep the fleet on the road?

Whether your fleet is big or small, you need a provider that is big enough to offer a full array of fleet management services but small enough to flex to your requirements.

So, working with highly skilled professionals who understand all aspects of the business and can support you in delivering the optimal fleet solution is key. Not all fleet management suppliers can provide this level of service; some of the larger leasing and fleet management companies may have more resources, but they often lack the flexibility of small to mid-size companies.

Relationships are important too. Make customer service a top priority and choose a supplier who will treat you like a partner because great service means getting through to someone when you and your drivers need them and who's willing to own a problem and get a resolution as quickly as possible. That's why a good fleet management provider supports their customers with a dedicated account team who understand your contract and the operational needs of your drivers.

Your fleet management provider should be part of your in-house fleet management process, allowing you to structure in-house resources to maximise your own business productivity. The key is to look for an experienced company with a successful track record of offering tailored solutions designed to help you boost fleet efficiency and manage costs effectively.

Fleet Funding Options: Choosing the Best Funding Option for Cost, Flexibility, and Operational Efficiency

Managing a fleet involves a significant financial commitment and strategic foresight. From Light Commercial Vans and Specialist Vehicles to heavy trucks, acquisition, operation, and replacement costs quickly accumulate and can have a major impact on business performance. Selecting the most suitable funding model is therefore essential—not only to keep expenses manageable but also to ensure that the fleet aligns with operational requirements, available cash flow, and long-term growth objectives.

Fleet operators have a wide range of funding options to consider, each offering distinct advantages and trade-offs. Understanding these can help organisations refine their fleet strategy, enhance financial efficiency, and maintain the flexibility needed to adapt to market conditions or shifting business priorities.

The ideal funding approach depends on several factors:

Cash flow and capital availability:

Can you afford an upfront purchase, or are predictable monthly costs more sustainable?

Fleet size and usage: High-mileage or specialist vehicles may benefit from inclusive leased maintenance packages.

Operational flexibility: Does your organisation need the ability to scale the fleet up or down quickly?

Residual value risk: Would you rather retain and resell vehicles at the end of their life cycle or avoid depreciation altogether?

For many fleets, a hybrid model often proves most effective—combining outright purchase for critical or bespoke assets with leasing or contract hire for standard vans and passenger vehicles. This balanced approach provides both cost control and adaptability while supporting long-term operational efficiency. Below is an overview of the main funding types to help guide your decision-making process.



Outright Purchase

Vehicles are bought outright using capital expenditure (CapEx), giving the organisation full ownership.

Advantages:

- Full ownership with no ongoing finance costs.
- Complete control over the fleet, including modifications and resale.
- No mileage or usage restrictions.

Considerations:

- Requires significant upfront capital, affecting cash flow.
- Depreciation risk is entirely borne by the business.
- Replacement and disposal must be managed in-house.

Best for: Companies with strong cash reserves and internal capacity to manage the vehicle lifecycle.

Operating Lease

Vehicles are rented for a fixed term (typically 2–5 years), with ownership retained by the leasing company.

Advantages:

- Preserves capital and supports healthy cash flow.
- Predictable monthly payments simplify budgeting.
- Often includes maintenance, insurance, or roadside assistance.
- Enables regular fleet renewal with newer models.

Considerations:

- Mileage and condition limits may apply.
- No ownership or residual value benefit.

Best for: Businesses seeking predictable costs, flexibility, and minimal administrative effort.

Finance Lease

A long-term rental that transfers most of the risks and rewards of ownership to the operator. At the end of the term, the operator may purchase the vehicle.

Advantages:

- Expands fleet without upfront capital outlay.
- Typically lower payments than outright purchase.
- Potential tax advantages.

Considerations:

- Commitment for the full lease term.
- Maintenance may be the operator's responsibility.
- May include usage restrictions.

Best for: Companies aiming for eventual ownership with manageable monthly payments.

Contract Hire

Similar to an operating lease but usually includes a full-service package covering maintenance, servicing, tyres, and breakdown cover.

Advantages:

- "All-in" simplicity with one predictable monthly fee.
- Minimises administrative work and downtime risk.
- Supports accurate long-term budgeting.

Considerations:

- More costly than a basic lease due to service inclusion.
- Limited flexibility if needs change mid-contract.

Best for: Businesses wanting a fully managed, worry-free fleet solution.

Hire Purchase

Vehicles are acquired through instalments, with ownership transferring after the final payment.

Advantages:

- Full ownership at the end of the term.
- Flexible deposits and repayment terms.
- Simple and widely available financing option.

Considerations:

- Higher monthly payments than leasing.
- Depreciation risk remains with the business.
- Disposal and residual management required.

Best for: Companies that value ownership but prefer to spread costs over time.



Vehicle Leaseback: What is it and How it Works

Another option especially for high value specialist Vehicles is leaseback which involves selling owned vehicles to a leasing company and immediately leasing them back for continued use. This allows a business to release capital tied up in assets while maintaining operational continuity.

Key Advantages

- **Improved Cash Flow:** Selling vehicles to a leasing provider unlocks capital previously tied up in the assets. This liquidity can be redirected toward growth, technology upgrades, or debt reduction, strengthening working capital.
- **Reduced Depreciation Risk:** Depreciation and residual value risk transfer to the leasing company, enabling businesses to focus on operations instead of asset management.
- **Operational Continuity:** Leaseback arrangements are seamless as vehicles remain in use, ensuring no disruption. Flexible lease terms can adjust to future fleet changes.
- **Simplified Fleet Management:** Many leasing providers offer maintenance, insurance, and management services, reducing administrative effort and operational complexity.
- **Financial Predictability:** Fixed monthly lease payments enhance budget control and forecasting accuracy, especially useful for businesses with tight margins or variable revenues.

Is Leaseback Right for Your Fleet?

While leaseback offers clear liquidity and efficiency advantages, it's not ideal for every business. Companies should assess:

- Vehicle age and condition.
- Fleet utilisation patterns.
- Financial goals and long-term asset strategy.

Engaging a reputable leasing provider with transparent terms is essential to ensure the benefits of improved cash flow, reduced risk, and operational continuity are fully realised.

Fleet funding is not a one-size-fits-all decision. From outright purchase to contract hire and leaseback, each model offers distinct advantages. The most effective strategy combines financial prudence with operational flexibility — ensuring your fleet not only supports daily operations, but drives long-term business success. ●

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More Than a Conversion: Why the Right Partner Matters

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A van is more than a vehicle. For many, it's the workplace – where every tool, every piece of kit and every inch of space matters.

Bri-Stor Systems' approach to conversions goes far beyond simply installing racking, instead focusing on aligning vehicles to their operational needs – from tools and equipment placement for maximised productivity, to layouts that support operator safety. Often, companies approach the conversion as a transactional purchase, without considering the whole-life impact of how the vehicle and conversion work together in the field. Bri-Stor Systems positions itself as a long-term partner aiming to add value to this conversation.

With over 40 years of experience, Bri-Stor Systems – part of The HEX Group – supports customers across procurement and fleet management functions, delivering bespoke solutions supported by best-in-class supply terms, driving cost savings and efficiencies across the vehicle lifecycle.

Getting it Right from the Start: Procurement & Conversion Support

Simplifying specifications

Competing priorities from stakeholders can make specifications complicated and procurement stressful. Picture this: the sustainability director wants more EVs, finance insists on driving costs down, marketing is focused on brand promotion and messaging, and the ops team require minimal downtime, reduced weight, and maximum productivity.

Before a van is even purchased, Bri-Stor Systems helps guide this conversation on specifications, evaluating options and bringing focus on the right combination of robust design and cost efficiency. Early stakeholder engagement removes complexity in design, resulting in a finished conversion that is fit for purpose.



Engineering teams make sure every detail is fit for purpose

Design that works for your team

Front-end design is critical. Off-the-shelf racking seldom fits the bill and small inefficiencies in the working day, can quickly add up to thousands of hours across the fleet. Bri-Stor Systems works closely with customers' job users to understand the complexities of their role and how vehicles and equipment are used in the field, ensuring conversions avoid common pitfalls such as overloaded or underutilised space where the need for ad-hoc modifications or workarounds could introduce health & safety risks.

Confidence in performance and compliance

From concept to handover, the Engineering team brings ideas to life with illustrations, technical CAD models, 3D virtual reality prototypes and support from an in-house expert who advises on Type Approval certification routes. With every modification following rigorous procedures, compliance with UK regulations is guaranteed.

Equally important, they guide clients toward decisions that deliver long-term value. For example, Halfords

committed to rolling out sustainable tyre vans when in-life data from field tests proved substantial savings in fuel and maintenance, delivering a strong ROI and solid business case for investment. As Karl Baker, Director of Operations at Halfords Mobile Expert, put it, *"Despite higher upfront costs, by working with Bri-Stor Systems and Portable Power, we were able to forecast potential savings over the vehicle's lifecycle amounting to over £3 million – or roughly £2,300 per vehicle annually."*



Dedicated Design teams bring concepts to life



Halfords' mobile tyre-fitting van

Cut, coated, converted

Bri-Stor Systems doesn't just assemble vehicles: it offers an unmatched level of control over every aspect of the fleet conversion process, handling sheet metal fabrication, powder coating, assembly, and livery application entirely in-house.

Keeping these capabilities under one roof in a vertically integrated model delivers greater control over lead times and product quality.

Sustainability embedded into every conversion

Beyond using lightweight, sustainable materials and working closely with trusted suppliers to make vehicles even more environmentally friendly, Bri-Stor Systems is committed to its Power360 strategy – designed to bring sustainable technologies to the fleet market in a way that delivers immediate operational improvements and cost savings.

Halfords' mobile tyre-fitting fleet now uses

20 vehicles equipped with Portable Power Technology's Pro Energy Pack solution which powers onboard equipment with a further 60 vehicles commissioned for delivery early in 2026.

Karl Baker adds: *"This success story is testament to the collaboration between Halfords, Bri-Stor Systems and its supply chain partners. The truth is, delivering a greener, more sustainable fleet is an opportunity for us all and it can only be delivered if we share our ideas, ambitions, and challenges."*

Bri-Stor Systems VR prototyping



Driving innovation

Bri-Stor Systems combines sustainability with innovation through VR prototyping. Stakeholders can approve designs before a single panel is cut, reducing waste and costly mistakes.

Andrew Goodwin, Sales and Marketing Director, says: *"VR prototypes are a game-changer when it comes to fleet design and approval. It drives customer and end-user engagement, removes lengthy back-and-forth amends, flags issues and facilitates design tweaks without delays or waste. To be able to order all the metal fabrication without building a physical prototype is revolutionary."*

...Cont'd on page 18▼



...Cont'd from page 17▲

Beyond the Forecourt: With You Throughout the Vehicle Lifecycle

Bri-Stor Systems adopts sustainable initiatives in its application of graphics

Closing the loop

Aligned with the shift towards a circular economy, Bri-Stor Systems offers de-fleet services to remove old vinyl and outdated kit from vans, enabling tooling to be refurbished and repurposed. A good example is the secondary life given to compact recovery trailers used by the roadside recovery market. Here, trailers are refurbished and deployed again, with managed inventory of refurbished spare parts.

Fast fixes

Centrally located in Staffordshire, Bri-Stor Systems' Service Team can supply parts or visit customers nationwide to provide on-site support offering peace of mind to fleet managers that downtime will be limited and vehicles back on the road quickly.

Brand impact. Zero waste

Bri-Stor Systems' in-house Graphics division designs, prints, and applies livery

to help maximise the brand impact of every vehicle whilst at the same time leading the way with sustainability initiatives.

Bri-Stor Systems has moved swiftly towards 100% carbon-neutrality in partnership with Metamark, a leading UK-based vinyl manufacturer. Thanks to the Vinyl360 programme, CO₂ in manufacturing is neutralised through a combination of green energy investment and certified offset programmes, further supported by zero waste being sent to landfill or incineration. Waste vinyl and lining paper is sent to specialist recycling centres, where they are transformed into secondary-life products like notebooks, traffic cones, and safety barriers.

Mark Wood, Graphics Manager at sister division HEX Graphics, comments: "Getting the recycling process right has been imperative, since PVC, the most common material used in vehicle branding, has been adding to landfill waste for decades.

By repurposing graphics both during rebranding and at end-of-life, we maximise recycling and reduce waste."

Data that drives action

Increasingly, customers rely on Bri-Stor Systems to fit additional safety and axle weight monitoring systems including front and rear-facing cameras and telematics systems that track vehicle health, fuel use, driver behaviour, GPS routes, load metrics, and emissions.

In summary, Bri-Stor Systems is much more than a converter fitting racking products; they are adding value to every stage of the design, manufacturing and conversion process.●

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MJ Quinn Rolls Out Webfleet to Boost Fleet Safety and Efficiency

Pictured: (L-R) Jamie Walker, Transport Support Manager, MJ Quinn; James Odell, Corporate Account Manager, Webfleet; Kerry Teesdale, Head of Fleet, MJ Quinn; Claire Griffiths-Davidson, Transport Support Manager, MJ Quinn; Tim Tanner, Enterprise Account Manager, Webfleet

National telecoms infrastructure specialist MJ Quinn is rolling out Webfleet, Bridgestone's trusted fleet management solution, to enhance driver safety, boost operational efficiency and support its sustainability goals.

The Liverpool-headquartered company, which operates a growing fleet of circa 3,000 commercial vehicles, has already deployed Webfleet across more than 800 vehicles, with plans to extend the technology across its entire fleet.

This includes hundreds of new vans assigned to engineers trained through MJ Quinn's in-house academy programme.

The investment forms part of a wider digital transformation strategy, with Webfleet positioned as a long-term asset

to help future-proof fleet operations.

"As an organisation, we had a clear vision for the type of solution required to advance our fleet – one that would enhance operational efficiency, reinforce safety standards and enable smarter, data-driven decision-making," said Kerry Teesdale, Head of Fleet at MJ Quinn.

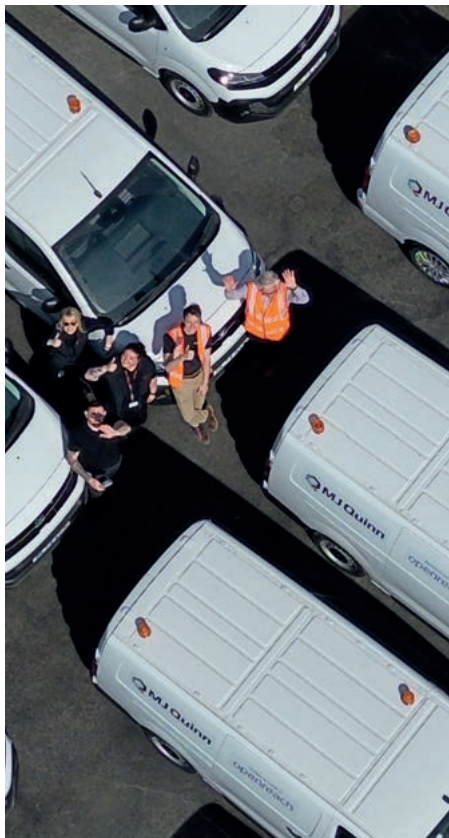
"We weren't simply looking for a supplier, we were seeking a long-term partner. Webfleet provides the actionable insights we need to manage our fleet proactively rather than reactively, while also supporting the development of a data-driven safety culture across the organisation."

Webfleet's OptiDrive 360 performance insights, combined with AI-powered Webfleet Video, play a pivotal role in MJ Quinn's road risk strategy. These

technologies offer real-time visibility into driving styles and behaviours, enabling targeted coaching and timely intervention to address issues such as speeding, mobile phone use and driver distraction.

"In line with our policy, the in-cab camera is only activated in escalation cases involving high-risk drivers, once coaching has been provided and further monitoring is deemed necessary," explained Teesdale.

"The ability to remotely enable or disable the in-cab camera on an individual basis, while keeping the forward-facing camera permanently active, represents a significant advancement in our road risk management. It not only enhances driver protection but also helps safeguard the business against false claims and costly litigation."



MJ Quinn expects to see significant cost savings over time through improved fuel efficiency, vehicle maintenance and reduced insurance claims.

Webfleet will play a key role in optimising workflows and streamlining job dispatch – particularly vital for a predominantly home-based engineering workforce. Its vehicle diagnostics and health monitoring capabilities, meanwhile, will help prevent breakdowns and reduce operational downtime.

In addition, MJ Quinn intends to leverage Webfleet's EV Transition Tool to identify vehicles suitable for electrification, ensuring this shift can be made without compromising service delivery.

"This investment supports our ambition to build a fleet that is safer, smarter and more sustainable – now and in the future," Teesdale said.

Alex Crane-Robinson Webfleet Regional Director, UK and Ireland, added: "We are proud to support MJ Quinn in its mission to drive continuous improvement across its fleet operations.

"By combining powerful data insights with advanced video telematics, Webfleet is proactively helping MJ Quinn create a safer, more efficient and more sustainable future for its mobile workforce." ●

Driving Change: New Electric Fleet Powers Cleaner Air and Greener Communities

South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council have added 11 new electric vehicles (EVs) to their shared fleet, marking another major step towards a cleaner, more sustainable future.

Following a successful 2024 trial proving the practicality and environmental benefits of EVs, the expanded fleet will support a range of council services—cutting emissions, improving air quality, and setting an example for others to follow. Residents will soon see the new vehicles in action across the region, demonstrating the councils' ongoing commitment to a low-carbon future.

Cllr Nadine Dommett, Executive Member for Decarbonising the Council, said:

"The introduction of these electric vehicles underlines our commitment to reducing carbon emissions. Our trial proved that EVs are reliable, cost-effective and vital in shrinking our carbon footprint—this is a



win for the environment, our communities and future generations."

Cllr Chris West, West Devon Borough Council's Lead Member for Climate and Biodiversity, added:

"Expanding our electric fleet shows how practical and dependable EVs can be. By investing today, we're improving air quality, cutting emissions and promoting a greener future for all."

The EV rollout forms part of a wider climate action programme across South Hams and West Devon, which also includes solar installations, community composting, tree planting, expanded EV charging and local biodiversity initiatives.

Together, these initiatives bring residents, environmental groups, town and parish councils, and other partners together to create greener, more sustainable opportunities for the region. ●

Fife Council invests in cutting-edge electric road lining equipment

Fife Council's transportation services has taken delivery of a new £46,000 state-of-the-art electric road lining vehicle, marking a major improvement in road marking across Fife.

The new all electric equipment brings improvements over diesel powered alternatives in carbon reduction, operational safety, productivity, and service quality.

Fife's roads spokesperson, Cllr Altany Craik, said: *"This new road marking vehicle is a significant upgrade from our previous diesel-powered road marking lorry. It will enable us to work more efficiently, safely, and sustainably, ensuring a higher standard of service for communities across Fife."*



The fully electric vehicle aligns with Fife Council's broader commitment to sustainability, helping reduce environmental impact while enhancing service delivery. ●



Heavy Machinery, Lighter Footprint: Smarter Transport for a Sustainable Future

By Joely Burrows, Senior Marketing Executive, Towmate Trailers

At Towmate Trailers, we've long recognised that heavy machinery and sustainability may not seem like natural allies, but that perception is changing rapidly. As climate pressures mount and regulations tighten, we're helping manufacturers and utility providers rethink how machines are built, transported, and powered.

Across critical sectors, the path to decarbonisation is becoming clearer. Electrification, combined with low-carbon energy sources, is gaining momentum. Once the market commits to a decarbonisation strategy, the real challenge begins with implementation. The rollout of electric vehicles, heat pumps, and renewable energy must match the rapid adoption rates seen with technologies such as smartphones and internet infrastructure.

Every link in the industrial and utilities supply chain, from transport logistics to trailer design, offers opportunities for greener practices. However, cost, complexity, and competing priorities can

hinder progress. Heavy-duty equipment may never be lightweight or traditionally portable, but more innovative transport solutions, like the trailers we design and build at Towmate, can make a measurable difference.

The Environmental Cost of Moving Machines

Transporting heavy machinery is among the most carbon-intensive activities in manufacturing and utilities, and emissions are only part of the story. Energy used for loading, the weight transported, and return trips with empty trailers all contribute to the overall carbon footprint.

Volatile fuel prices and stricter regulations are increasing the pressure to cut both environmental and financial costs. Companies now face a dual challenge: lowering operational expenses while achieving ambitious sustainability targets. Electrification and low-carbon fuels, such as hydrogen, are vital to decarbonising operations, transforming traditional logistical methods.

At Towmate Trailers, we see businesses asking tough questions: Is every journey necessary? Can routes be combined? Can vehicles or trailers be modified to reduce environmental impact? By analysing materials, trailer design, scheduling, and load management, companies can determine the real cost of each journey. Cutting emissions is no longer just about regulatory compliance; it's a competitive advantage.

Lighter Loads, Smarter Trailers

Weight is always a critical factor, especially as electric vehicles and machinery become more common on-site. Electric models often weigh more than their diesel equivalents, which limits payload capacity. Lightweight trailers, like those we design at Towmate, offer a straightforward solution, enabling teams to carry more per journey while remaining compliant.

Trailers themselves produce no direct emissions, supporting lower-carbon operations even when paired with conventional vehicles. Many of our

clients are moving towards self-sufficient site operations, transporting all tools, equipment, and materials in a single vehicle and trailer setup. This reduces fleet size, cuts trips, and improves efficiency.

One example we are proud to support is the hotbox trailer developed with Clancy, designed to keep asphalt at working temperature and eliminate unnecessary return trips. Teams can now complete multiple jobs in a single day, reducing fuel consumption, emissions, and downtime.

At Towmate, we apply the same environmental responsibility to our own operations as we do to our trailers. Our modular trailer designs enable flexible, circular use of equipment, reducing the need for specialised vehicles and helping clients stay efficient while lowering their environmental footprint.

Staying Ahead of Regulation

Transport emissions regulations are becoming increasingly strict. Clean Air Zones, national net-zero targets, and sustainability requirements for public-sector contracts are raising the stakes. Non-compliance can lead to fines, delays, and reputational damage. Forward-thinking businesses are investing proactively in compliance tools and partnering with experts to navigate evolving legislation. From Euro

6-compliant engines to electric tow vehicles and purpose-built trailers, we ensure that our solutions meet current and upcoming standards, providing our clients with resilience and a competitive edge.

Smarter Routes, Greener Results

Route optimisation is often overlooked, yet it remains one of the simplest ways to cut emissions. GPS-enabled tracking, real-time data sharing, and careful scheduling help reduce congestion, idling, and wasted miles. Nearshoring, sourcing, or assembling components closer to the final destination further cuts long-haul transport emissions and boosts supply chain resilience. Clancy's collaboration with Towmate illustrates this approach: customised hotbox trailers carry enough asphalt for multiple jobs, enabling teams to move efficiently from site to site without returning to base. This cuts fuel consumption, emissions per task, and minimises disruption to local communities. More innovative logistics, paired with purpose-built trailers, provide both environmental and operational benefits.

Sustainability Through Engineering

Sustainable design begins at the drawing board. At Towmate, our engineers minimise environmental impact by using

recyclable materials, durable construction, and modular components that make maintenance and future upgrades easier. Even small design improvements can bring significant benefits over a trailer's lifecycle. Simulation tools enable engineers to test performance virtually, reducing waste and development time. As the industry adopts circular economy principles, our engineering choices are increasingly shaping not only the production of equipment but also its transportation, maintenance, and reuse.

From Heavy-Duty to High-Efficiency

Sustainable machinery transport doesn't require a radical overhaul. The most significant gains often come from incremental changes, lighter materials, smarter routes, modular design, and a focus on durability and flexibility.

At Towmate Trailers, we're committed to helping businesses reduce environmental impact while improving efficiency and performance. Heavy-duty no longer has to mean high impact. More innovative approaches from A to B are already paving the way for a more sustainable future, one trailer at a time. ●



To learn more visit: www.towmatetrailers.com



Ensuring Your Fleet Stays Mobile in Winter

As daylight hours shrink and temperatures fall, fleet operators enter one of the most demanding phases of the operational calendar. Ice, heavy rain, low visibility, and rapidly changing road conditions can turn routine journeys into logistical challenges. For professional fleet managers, winter readiness isn't simply about keeping vehicles on the move — it's about safeguarding drivers, maintaining service levels, and preserving operational continuity when the conditions are at their most punishing.

Preparing the Fleet

Preventative maintenance is the cornerstone of effective winter operations. Comprehensive pre-winter inspections should cover battery health, tyre condition and pressure, fluid levels, braking systems,

and lighting. Cold temperatures can reduce battery efficiency by up to 30%, while underinflated or worn tyres can compromise grip and braking distance on wet or icy surfaces.

Forward-thinking fleet operators are increasingly using telematics and vehicle health data to transition from scheduled maintenance to predictive servicing. Real-time diagnostics can detect anomalies in battery voltage, tyre pressure, or fluid temperature before they result in roadside failures — reducing downtime and unplanned maintenance costs.

Supporting Drivers

Vehicles are only as safe as the people operating them. Seasonal driver training focused on winter-specific risks — such as managing traction loss, navigating standing water, and adjusting stopping

distances — can significantly reduce incident rates. Refresher modules on fatigue management and hazard anticipation also help sustain driver confidence in difficult conditions.

Updated driver policies are equally important. Clear procedures for reporting incidents, escalating mechanical issues, and responding to weather alerts ensure consistency across dispersed fleets. Equipping vehicles with essential winter kits — including de-icers, high-visibility clothing, torches, and emergency supplies — provides an extra layer of resilience should drivers face unexpected delays or breakdowns.

Leveraging Technology

Technology now plays a decisive role in winter fleet resilience. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) such as adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, and autonomous emergency braking are becoming standard across modern fleets, helping mitigate driver error in poor conditions. Meanwhile, connected fleet management platforms provide visibility across entire networks, enabling route optimisation in response to real-time weather and traffic data.

For electric and hybrid fleets, cold-weather strategy requires additional attention. Low temperatures can reduce EV range by 15–25%, making route planning, charge scheduling, and battery preconditioning critical. Fleets can mitigate this by integrating telematics with energy management software, ensuring optimal charging cycles and vehicle readiness.

Balancing Safety and Productivity

The essence of effective winter fleet management lies in balancing operational output with duty of care. Well-defined thresholds for suspending operations in extreme weather safeguard both personnel and brand reputation. As one fleet operations director put it: *"A short delay is manageable — a serious incident isn't."*

By combining predictive maintenance, data-driven decision-making, and targeted driver support, fleet operators can build resilience into their winter operations — minimising disruption, maximising productivity, and maintaining safety across every mile.

Winter weather may be unpredictable, but with intelligent preparation, your fleet doesn't have to be. ●

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Sleep Apnoea: The Hidden Hazard in Your Fleet

When it comes to fleet safety, the leading causes of collisions, speeding, distraction, and impairment—tend to dominate policy discussions. Yet an often-overlooked risk may be sitting quietly behind the wheel: sleep apnoea.

Sleep apnoea is far more than snoring or disrupted sleep. It is a chronic condition in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts during rest, leading to fragmented sleep and significant fatigue. Drivers affected by it may appear alert, but suffer from microsleeps, delayed reaction times, and impaired judgment—factors that can dramatically increase the likelihood of an accident. Within a professional driving context, that risk can translate into serious operational, legal, and human consequences.

Why Fleet Managers Should Take Notice

Fatigue-related incidents represent one of the most preventable causes of fleet collisions and downtime. Research suggests drivers with untreated sleep apnoea may be up to seven times more likely to crash. For operators, that means not only the potential for injury or loss of life, but also vehicle damage, schedule disruption, and reputational

harm—costs that extend far beyond the immediate incident.

Unlike a speeding violation, fatigue isn't visible. It can go unnoticed until an incident occurs, making proactive management essential to a fleet's risk and compliance strategy.

Recognising the Warning Signs

Sleep apnoea often develops gradually, and symptoms can be subtle. Fleet managers and supervisors should remain aware of indicators such as:

- Persistent loud snoring or breathing pauses during sleep.
- Chronic daytime fatigue, despite adequate rest hours.
- Difficulty maintaining focus on long or monotonous routes.
- Morning headaches or irritability.

These are not minor complaints; they are potential red flags for impaired alertness and compromised road safety.

Turning Awareness into Action

Fleets can play a pivotal role in identifying and managing health-related risks through a culture of safety and wellbeing:

Encourage screening: Promote access to occupational health assessments for drivers showing symptoms. Early diagnosis can lead to effective treatment,

often through simple interventions such as CPAP therapy.

Educate and communicate: Reinforce that fatigue is as dangerous as driving under the influence. Awareness campaigns and toolbox talks can normalise discussion of sleep quality and alertness.

Review scheduling practices: Long or irregular shifts can exacerbate sleep disorders. Where possible, prioritise consistent schedules and adequate rest breaks for drivers managing sleep-related conditions.

Integrate with safety systems: Combine telematics data, in-cab cameras, and driver behaviour analytics to detect patterns consistent with fatigue—such as lane drift, harsh braking, or prolonged idling.

Beyond Compliance: Building a Culture of Health

Managing sleep apnoea within a fleet isn't just about meeting safety obligations—it's about valuing people as the core of operational performance. Drivers who feel supported in managing their health are more focused, reliable, and engaged. Fleets that champion wellbeing often see measurable improvements in safety KPIs, employee retention, and overall productivity. ●

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Rising Demand for EV Training as UK airports Accelerate Electrification and Automation

UK airports are facing a growing skills challenge as the electrification and automation of ground support vehicles accelerates. The rapid introduction of electric and autonomous vehicles has created a gap between technology adoption and workforce preparedness, with implications for safety, efficiency, and compliance on airport aprons.

Recent moves are driving this transition forward. Earlier this month, the Government launched the Airside Automation Group, bringing together Heathrow Airport, Aer Lingus, and International Airlines Group (IAG) to speed



up the deployment of new technologies. At the same time, trials of autonomous baggage tugs and electric passenger buses are underway at both Heathrow and Teesside International, testing how these vehicles can operate safely in busy airside environments.

Major operators are also investing heavily. DHL, for example, has pledged £16 million to electrify its entire ground support equipment fleet at East Midlands Airport by 2032. The project marks one of the largest commitments of its

kind in the UK and demonstrates how sustainability targets are reshaping ground handling operations.

According to Autotech Training, these developments have brought the skills gap into sharp focus. Unlike conventional vehicles, EVs and AVs contain high-voltage systems and complex automation technology that require specialised knowledge to operate and maintain safely. Technicians without the correct training risk both injury and costly operational downtime,



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UK Motorists Worried Over Road Safety as Self-Driving Taxis Arrive, Reveals Venson

As Moove and Waymo announce plans to expand their autonomous ride-hailing partnership from the U.S. to London, research[i] from Venson Automotive Solutions highlights that UK motorists remain cautious about the introduction of self-driving vehicles on British roads.

According to the Venson survey, one in three motorists say the arrival of self-driving taxis in the UK gives them cause for concern over road safety, citing worries such as increased vehicle congestion and competition to meet ride-hailing deadlines.

While autonomous driving technology continues to advance, attitudes towards it appear to vary significantly by age. A survey of teenage future fleet drivers conducted by Venson found that 44% of young respondents would feel safe in a self-driving car - more than double the number of adults who said the same. Similarly, 56% of teenagers believe that automated driving represents a positive step forward for road safety, compared to just 24% of adults.

Sustainability remains a unifying theme across all age groups, with 100% of respondents agreeing that the future of transport should prioritise protecting the planet. This reinforces the growing importance of environmentally conscious fleet and mobility solutions in shaping the transport landscape.

When asked about the wider use of artificial intelligence in driving technology, 44% of students said "we will adapt," while 22% described



it as "an exciting prospect." Only a small proportion - also 22% - said it was "a cause for concern," suggesting younger generations are more open to the integration of AI in transport.

Ladi Delano, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Moove said of its collaboration with Waymo, "This partnership represents a major step forward for urban mobility, bringing world-class innovation to one of the world's greatest cities." Despite safety concerns, this opinion is supported by the Venson survey respondents, with many drivers seeing clear productivity benefits to autonomous mobility. One in three company car and grey fleet drivers believe self-driving vehicles will allow people to make better use of their travel time, enabling them to work and attend virtual meetings on the go.

Simon Staton, Client Management Director at Venson Automotive Solutions, commented: "Innovative technologies coming to UK roads could be transformational for the fleet and automotive sector and provide exciting future employment opportunities in our industry. However, clearly the fears of the ride-hailing public need to be proven unfounded."

As companies like Moove and Waymo collect millions of miles of driving data to improve safety through machine learning, the findings from Venson's latest survey highlight the importance of building public trust and demonstrating safety credentials to ensure successful adoption of autonomous technologies in the UK. ●

while employers face a duty of care to ensure staff can work safely under recognised standards.

"Airports are under pressure to decarbonise and modernise at unprecedented speed, but technology alone can't deliver change," comments Autotech Training's Director of Operations, Alistair McCrindle.

"The workforce has to be ready to manage high-voltage and autonomous systems safely. We're seeing a sharp increase in demand from airside teams seeking accredited, hands-on training so they can keep pace with these developments."

Responding to the challenge

The shift towards electrification is creating a pressing need for specialist training across the aviation industry. Autotech Training, an IMI-approved training provider, is helping airports and ground handling companies respond to this challenge.

Its courses are delivered directly on-site, combining practical, hands-on experience with accredited instruction in electric and hybrid vehicle maintenance. By training technicians on the exact vehicles they use every day, Autotech Training ensures that learning is immediately relevant, minimises operational disruption, and builds lasting technical confidence.

This approach is already being adopted by some of the sector's leading organisations. Menzies Aviation, Cobalt Ground Solutions, and DHL at East Midlands Airport have all partnered with Autotech Training to deliver IMI Level 2 and Level 3 Heavy Electric/Hybrid Vehicle courses to their engineers and technicians. The training takes place at their own facilities and on their actual high-voltage ground service equipment (GSE), such as tugs, high-loaders, and pushback vehicles. This ensures staff develop a deep understanding of the vehicles and systems they are responsible for. ●

To learn more visit: <https://autotechgroup.co.uk/>

To learn more visit: www.venson.com

Charging Ahead: Powering the Next Generation of Smarter Fleets



As UK fleets push toward net-zero, one message is becoming impossible to ignore — the road to decarbonisation runs through the power grid.

For public sector and commercial fleet managers, charging infrastructure now sits at the heart of operational success. A well-planned system can lower running costs, minimise downtime, and make daily operations more efficient. But an underdeveloped or poorly matched setup can have the opposite effect, grounding vehicles and disrupting essential services.

Strategy First: Smarter Charging by Design

The most successful electrification projects begin long before a single vehicle is delivered. Every fleet has its own duty cycles, power profiles, and operational quirks, meaning there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Understanding where, when, and how vehicles operate is the first step in designing a truly efficient charging network.

For most operators, whether councils, housing associations, or utilities, depot-based charging remains the foundation. Using intelligent load management and automated scheduling, smart charging systems can shift demand to off-peak hours, avoid high-tariff periods, and balance energy use across the network, saving operators as much as 30% on energy bills.

Forward-thinking organisations such as Nottingham City Council and Transport for London are already designing depots with additional electrical capacity built in. This approach not only supports fleet expansion but also ensures readiness for the next generation of high-capacity EVs and grid-connected technologies.

Collaborating for Capacity

Some local authorities are going further by creating shared charging hubs that serve multiple public sector fleets and contractors. Combining renewable energy generation, on-site battery storage, and intelligent grid connections, these shared facilities maximise energy efficiency while cutting overall costs.

Partnerships with Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) are essential. Grid reinforcements can take up to two years to deliver, so early dialogue is crucial to ensure the right capacity is in place when the vehicles arrive.

Keeping Options Open: The Role of Public Networks

Depot charging may do the heavy lifting, but public charging networks play a valuable supporting role. Linking telematics and route planning tools with real-time charger data enables drivers to quickly locate available points — a feature particularly crucial for emergency response and mobile maintenance fleets operating across broader regions.

As one local authority fleet manager put it: *"Public charging isn't our weakness; it's our safety net."*

Power, Data, and a New Operational Mindset

Smart charging does more than refuel vehicles, it generates actionable insights. When combined with telematics and maintenance data, charging analytics help managers identify inefficiencies, track energy costs, and even predict component wear before failures occur.

Energy management is quickly becoming as critical as fleet management itself. The operators that understand their data, from grid load to vehicle performance, are the ones achieving the most significant gains in uptime, efficiency, and sustainability.

The Road Ahead

Emerging technologies such as vehicle-to-grid (V2G) systems, bi-directional charging, and inductive wireless systems are already being trialled at depots across the UK. Fleets investing in infrastructure today should plan beyond current needs and design for flexibility, ensuring their systems can evolve alongside new vehicles and grid capabilities.

Electrification isn't just a phase of change — it's a complete transformation in how fleets operate, refuel, and manage energy.

And that transformation doesn't start with the vehicle. It begins with the power behind it. ●

Inside the EV transition: What fleet operators are really up against



Russell Olive, UK Director at vaylens

Fleet electrification looks straightforward on paper. Replace diesel with electric, install chargers, watch the carbon numbers drop. But sit down with the people running fleets, and the picture gets far more complicated.

At a recent vaylens roundtable we brought together operators from Islington Council, Affinity Water, the University of Cambridge, the Ministry of Defence and several others. Different missions, different scales, different budgets. Yet the same five roadblocks kept coming up.

Infrastructure that lags behind

Infrastructure was the biggest shared frustration. Some drivers can't charge at home. Depots are already drawing all the power they can. Getting new capacity from the grid takes months or even years.

One fleet told us about requesting a one-megawatt upgrade. The quote came back at £1 million and a five-year wait. When they reduced the request to 0.9 MW, the cost dropped to £20,000 and the job was done in six months. That single decimal point changed everything. These cliff-edge costs make long-term planning almost impossible – but it's not sustainable

So, fleets are getting creative. Some are building solar farms on unused land. Others are pairing depots with other services or trialling shared charging with neighbouring organisations. It's progress,

but patchy and often self-funded. Until the grid catches up, charging remains the bottleneck.

Vehicles that can actually do the job

Range anxiety still grabs headlines, but the real issue is whether vehicles can deliver under load – rather than just on paper. Fleets don't move empty boxes. They tow pumps, carry tools, run compressors, and haul waste. An e-van may have a 200-mile range, but in practice, add a trailer and the batteries drain fast.

Battery weight also eats into payload. In some cases, it nudges vehicles into higher licence categories, forcing driver retraining. Operators are learning to adapt lighter conversions, smarter load management, even stripping out racking to claw back weight. It works, but it's a constant balancing act between what the vehicle can carry and what the job demands.

Operations that can't be predicted

Fleets with fixed routes (refuse trucks, last-mile delivery) can plan charging schedules. Reactive operations can't. Utilities, emergency services and contractors never know when the next call-out will come.

As one participant said, *"Drivers can come in with a full charge, finish their shift, plug in at home - and then get called straight back out."* This unpredictability breaks every neat charging model.

Smarter systems are the only way to cope. Linking charging with telematics and transport management software means vehicles can be charged for the jobs they face, rather than a one-size-fits-all overnight top-up. It's a quiet revolution in scheduling and one that will define how fast complex fleets can truly electrify.

Drivers who need to move with you

Technology alone doesn't drive change; people do. Some drivers are wary of EVs. They worry about running out of charge or not finding a working plug. Many fears are based on old information, but they still matter.

Several fleets said that once drivers made

the switch, they didn't want to go back. The reliability stood out. One Tesla pool car had run for 21 months without a single day off the road, while the diesel equivalents were constantly in the workshop. Experiences like that shift attitudes far faster than any briefing document.

Until every driver has that firsthand experience, managers will need to guide, reassure and communicate constantly. The transition only works when the workforce believes in it.

Collaboration that finally feels real

Perhaps the most positive thread through the discussion was the willingness to collaborate. Councils and contractors are sharing depot chargers. Waste operators and utilities are co-investing in solar and grid upgrades.

One participant compared it to how hauliers used to trade diesel between depots at cost. *"We'll be doing the same with energy,"* they said. That means better scheduling, open data and mutual trust. It's already happening in small pockets and it's likely to grow fast.

A collective reality check

No one around the table doubted the need for electrification. The commitment is there. What they questioned was the pace, the infrastructure, and the practical support available.

Most have learned to make do: to push forward where possible, pause where necessary, and plan carefully around what the grid and vehicle supply can deliver. They know battery ranges are improving. They know charging will expand. But in the meantime, they have work to do, vehicles to run, and services to deliver.

The EV transition isn't theory for these operators; it's a daily exercise in problem-solving. Balancing power with payload, infrastructure with operations, ambition with reality. And when such diverse organisations agree on the sticking points, it gives us a cohesive and clear starting point for solving them. ●

New CCS agreement supports UK transport technology modernisation and digitalisation



Crown Commercial Service have launched a new transport technology agreement called RM6347 Transport Technology. This agreement replaces RM6099 Transport Technology & Associated Services.

This new agreement offers a simple and flexible way for you to buy the technology you need for road, rail, aviation, and urban transport systems across the UK. The agreement will go live on 4 November 2025 and will run for six to eight years.

Helping cut emissions with clean technology

This new agreement helps Britain become a leader in clean energy by investing in new technologies that reduce emissions.

Areas include:

- electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure that helps reduce anxiety about the transition from internal combustion vehicles to EVs
- smart ticketing for integrated public transport
- services to ensure the right solutions meet local user needs

These capabilities help authorities

spend public money on meaningful improvements to daily life, supporting infrastructure that enables worry-free EV adoption and better, more accessible public transport.

This ensures public money is spent on practical improvements to daily life, such as cleaner air and better transport.

This agreement helps create value for the nation by modernising how public sector organisations buy transport solutions. This benefits citizens beyond just cost reduction.

Here's how this will improve everyday travel for citizens:

- real-time information on integrated apps helps reduce journey times and uncertainty for travellers
- artificial intelligence-powered traffic systems cut congestion and emissions, leading to smoother, greener journeys
- predictive maintenance prevents delays by fixing issues before they cause major failures, keeping the network reliable

Modern transport solutions available through the agreement

Designed to support transport modernisation and digitalisation across all modes of transport throughout the UK, the replacement agreement helps:

- local authorities to buy smart traffic management systems such as adaptive traffic signals, real-time monitoring networks, and intelligent pedestrian crossing systems
- rail operators to access digital ticketing solutions and network monitoring services
- city councils to source electric vehicle charging infrastructure and parking management solutions through one comprehensive agreement
- airports to purchase security systems and environmental monitoring technology

Fewer barriers, more efficient procurement processes

By removing barriers that constrain public sector procurement, the new agreement increases customer flexibility with no limitations on the number of suppliers, no value restrictions on call-off contracts, and contract lengths that can be set by customers to align with specific project requirements.

Dr Philip Orumwense CBE, Chief Technology Procurement Officer and Commercial Director, Crown Commercial Service explains:

"We have collaborated with partners across the public sector including suppliers and public sector bodies to develop this agreement which is based on national strategies. Buyers can source all their transport technology and service requirements in one place through this agreement from the accredited suppliers."

"Built to support delivery of local and national transport plans and newly nationalised services, the agreement will serve all levels of Government and the wider public sector, and all scales of requirement. Crown Commercial Service through this agreement aims to support the delivery of national transport plans and strategies."

"By using the new regulations and removing traditional barriers such as supplier limits and contract value restrictions, this agreement creates more flexibility for buyers. We have additionally deployed SME friendly and innovative features in support of UK businesses across all transport modes."

Innovations

This new agreement makes it easier to buy and manage transport services. Here are the main improvements:

Full use of new regulations

The agreement uses all the benefits of new procurement regulations so we don't give you one way of working. Instead, we use our category management knowledge to recommend the best ways to get value for money, and support you in developing your requirements, tender and contract.

An easier buying process with more flexibility for customers

No limits on the number of suppliers, contract values, or how long contracts run, giving customers more choice in how they buy. The removal of barriers also creates opportunities for small to medium enterprises (SMEs).

Modern contract terms

Updated to Public Sector Contracting terms and conditions, combined with lots designed for specific market areas, creating a less complex approach while ensuring all regulatory requirements are met.

Comprehensive lotting structure

Each lot covers all the services customers need in one area. For example, the parking services lot includes professional advice, day-to-day management, enforcement, and new infrastructure – which means customers don't need to run separate competitions.



Lotting structure for RM6347 Transport Technology

The framework comprises 8 primary lots, split into sub-lots to support specific markets:

- **Lot 1** – Transport Professional Services.
- **Lot 2** – Transport Data Services.
- **Lot 3** – Parking Management.
- **Lot 4** – Environmental Monitoring & Climate Resilience.
- **Lot 5** – Enforcement, Security and Compliance.
- **Lot 6** – Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure.
- **Lot 7a** – Transport System Integration.
- **Lot 7b** – Smart Ticketing.
- **Lot 7c** – Transport Network Management.
- **Lot 8a** – Network Devices.
- **Lot 8b** – Cabinets, Furniture, Storage and Ancillaries.
- **Lot 8c** – Lighting & Electrical.
- **Lot 8d** – Traffic Management Technologies.
- **Lot 8e** – Detectors, Informing and Communication Technologies.



To learn more about the Transport Technology agreement visit the agreement page, www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6347 or contact the CCS Service Desk at info@crowncommercial.gov.uk.



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EV Expert Urges Businesses to Act Before EV Depot Charging Grant Deadline

Fleet operators across the UK are being urged to act now or risk missing out on up to £1 million in Government support for depot charging infrastructure, as the deadline for applications to the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (EVI) Depot Charging Scheme is looming.

Naomi Nye, EV expert at Drax Electric Vehicles, warns that time is running out for fleet operators still deciding whether to apply.

"Electrification is inevitable for fleets, but costs and lead times pose significant challenges," she says.

"This grant provides businesses with much-needed support, but deadlines are strict. The scheme, which covers up to 75% of the costs for installing EV charging infrastructure at depot sites, will close to new applications on 28 November 2025, or earlier if the available funding runs out. All installation work must be completed by 31 March 2026."

Eligibility

The government-backed grant is available to public and private sector fleet

operators, local authorities, and non-profit organisations with at least one year of operational history. To qualify, applicants must own at least one EV, have landlord consent for depot upgrades, and ensure sufficient grid capacity at their site.

Funding is available for a wide range of infrastructure elements, including charge points, installation materials, civil works, and, where applicable, battery energy storage systems or solar costs, with a maximum limit of £1 million per applicant across all locations. The scheme, delivered with support from Cenex and the Energy Saving Trust, is part of the Government's broader £30 million investment to promote the electrification of commercial fleets.

Urgency

"Businesses risk missing out on up to £1 million in support if they delay," continues Nye. "The size and complexity of depot charging projects make timing crucial, especially when grid upgrades or site redesigns are necessary. Installations need time for planning, lead times and completion. Therefore, those delaying

their applications might find themselves unable to complete installations before the deadline, even if funding is secured, due to high demand."

Dedicated support

"Working with experienced partners can make a significant difference when navigating the complexities of government funding," says Nye. "Many operators, particularly those new to depot electrification, may lack the in-house expertise needed to manage applications and avoid common pitfalls.

"Drax Electric Vehicles, for example, supports fleet operators throughout the entire process - from initial site assessments and technical planning to guidance on grant applications, installation oversight, and post-deployment optimisation. We're already supporting several customers in making their applications and expect this will only increase as we get closer to the deadline."

With demand expected to rise in the final weeks, Naomi Nye advises operators not to delay: those looking to access this funding should act now. ●

To learn more visit: <https://energy.drax.com/insights>



Paul Hollick, Chair at the AFP



Faster Charging Speeds Crucial for Electric Van Adoption, Says Association of Fleet Professionals

Currently, models available from major manufacturers are rated from around 50-125kWh, meaning that even the best will take around 40 minutes to charge from 10-80% in ideal circumstances, and are usually slower in real world conditions.

Paul Hollick, chair at the AFP, said: "When it comes to tackling the reasons behind slow fleet adoption of electric vans, prominence has been given to issues of range and payload but there has been limited discussion of charging speeds.

"In fact, as discussed at a recent meeting of our megafleets committee, which consists of our members who operate very large fleets, charging speeds tend to be a bigger real-world frustration. Having a driver sitting around for an hour while their van charges is expensive.

"If vans were capable of faster charging then, to a significant extent, other issues affecting them tend to become more manageable. For example, the negative impact of higher payloads on range becomes less important if you can recharge to 80% every 125 miles in 15 minutes."

Paul said there was a perception among AFP members that vans were being built with slower charging capabilities because manufacturers believed achieving the lowest possible purchase price was crucial.

"This misconception is understandable. However, the message that we are hearing from our members is that they would be willing to pay more for faster charging capacity. Over a typical six-year fleet lifecycle, the additional cost of a rapid charging van would be more than outweighed by increasing the availability of the driver. "There is no doubt that available van charging speeds now lag far behind typical electric cars and we believe that many more fleet operators would be won over to electric vans if an 80% charge was achievable in 10-15 minutes."

He added it was also important to ensure drivers were accessing charge points capable of matching the highest speed of the vehicle.

"If the van can charge to 150kWh, fleets need to get as close to this figure as possible from the public charger. Too often, drivers are charging at 50kWh because of the high number of other vehicles tethered."

Paul said that a further boost to electric

van practicality could be delivered soon by the removal of some compliance requirements for 4.25 tonne electric vans.

"As has been widely reported, the government is working its way through the technical issues in this area and we hope to see progress soon on eliminating what we consider unnecessary tachograph, driver hours and MOT requirements."

AFP members were very aware, he added, that the ZEV Mandate was now rapidly ramping up sales targets for electric vans, reaching 24% in 2026.

"Sales continue to lag some way behind the government targets but manufacturers are going to come under increasing pressure to push electric vans onto fleets. The point in time when most operators can no longer ignore electrification and carry on buying diesel is coming soon."

"With that moment approaching, we'd like to see a greater understanding between manufacturers, fleets and government about the practicalities of electric van adoption, something we have been working on via the Van Plan created alongside the BVRLA and others. Rapid charging speeds and friction-free use of 4.25t models are examples of this."

"Also, it's sadly true that many of the electric vans introduced so far have proven unreliable in day-to-day use, sometimes because of faults that should've been recognised at the design stage. We need more effectiveness from the next generation of models."●

To learn more visit: www.theafp.co.uk



Fastned Gets Green Light to Build the UK's First indoor Drive-Thru Ultra-Rapid Electric Vehicle Charging Hub in Aberdeen

Fastned, the UK's best-rated ultra-rapid electric vehicle (EV) charging operator, has secured planning permission to build a revolutionary charging hub that will repurpose an existing warehouse in Aberdeen — the first project of its kind in the UK.

Aberdeen City Council has approved Fastned's plans to transform the Grampian House warehouse, located off Virginia Street on the city's inner ring road, into a state-of-the-art ultra-rapid charging hub.

The facility will feature 12 charging bays capable of delivering up to 400kW, giving drivers as much as 100 miles of range in just five minutes. A winter 2026 opening is targeted.

The new hub will also include a shop, toilets, and a seating area, providing comfort and convenience for drivers while their vehicles charge.

Designed in Fastned's signature drive-thru layout, the hub will allow vehicles to enter, charge, and exit seamlessly—improving accessibility for all vehicle types, cutting wait times, and boosting site efficiency. By installing chargers within the existing warehouse structure, Fastned will offer drivers shelter from wind and rain while significantly reducing the environmental impact of new construction.

This innovative reuse of industrial land marks a new approach to sustainable EV infrastructure development and represents the UK's first indoor, drive-thru ultra-rapid charging hub.

"Fastned is adding many urban locations for charging hubs to its portfolio as it sees a growing need for ultra-rapid charging

in cities," said Tom Hurst, UK Country Director at Fastned. "I'm over the moon that Aberdeen City Council has supported our application and given us the green light. This project is a revolutionary approach to EV charging and will transform the customer experience—especially in a part of the country where the weather isn't always the best. We're delighted to support Scotland's EV transition and expand our network further north."

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, welcomed the announcement: *"This is a really positive development to support Scotland's vision for public EV charging and a great example of how public ambition and private investment can drive the shift to electric vehicles. We've already achieved our target of 6,000 public charge points two years ahead of schedule, with the private sector now responsible for more than two-thirds of Scotland's charging network. This new hub—the first of its kind in the UK—shows that Scotland can lead the way in transforming how people choose to travel."*●



To learn more visit: www.fastnedcharging.com/en-gb

Fit to Drive? The Hidden Safety Risk Every Fleet Should Address



For most fleet operators, the thought of one of their drivers being on the road under the influence of drugs or alcohol is very concerning. However, across the UK, impaired driving remains a persistent and often underestimated threat to both safety and operational continuity. As we approach the festive season, when social gatherings, long shifts, and end-of-year fatigue all coincide, the risk becomes even greater.

The Hidden Risk on the Road

While drink-driving campaigns have reduced incidents over the decades, the rise in drug-driving convictions paints a more concerning picture. Department for Transport data shows offences have more than doubled in the past five years. And not all impairment stems from illegal drugs—prescription medications, strong painkillers, and even some cold remedies can affect reaction times and alertness.

For fleet operators, the danger isn't just the obvious night out. Morning-after impairment is a major issue, particularly during the Christmas period when staff may attend parties, drive early the next day, or underestimate how long alcohol remains in their system. A driver who feels "fine" may still be over the legal limit—and a single misjudgment can have

catastrophic consequences.

Why Testing Matters

Effective drug and alcohol testing goes beyond compliance—it's a cornerstone of professional fleet management. It reinforces a clear message: safety comes first. Regular testing not only deters risky behaviour but also demonstrates a strong duty of care to drivers, clients, and the public.

A robust testing strategy delivers:

- **Deterrence:** Visible testing reduces temptation and reinforces accountability.
- **Detection:** Identifies impairment before it leads to an incident or legal exposure.
- **Duty of care:** Shows that the business takes driver welfare and public safety seriously.
- **Culture:** Builds open communication around fatigue, medication, and responsible behaviour.

Best Practice for Fleet Managers

A strong testing policy should be transparent, fair, and consistent. Fleet managers should:

- **Reinforce policy awareness** – Remind drivers of company policies and the risks of morning-after driving through toolbox talks and safety

briefings.

- **Increase random testing frequency** – Higher visibility during December helps maintain awareness and deterrence.
- **Train supervisors** – Ensure team leaders can identify early signs of impairment and know how to respond appropriately.
- **Provide support routes** – Offer confidential access to occupational health or employee assistance programmes for those who may need help.

The Role of Technology

Modern saliva and breath-testing kits, combined with digital reporting systems, make it easier than ever to maintain compliance with minimal disruption. Many fleets now integrate testing results with wider driver health data to provide a holistic view of safety performance.

Building a Culture of Safety

Drug and alcohol testing isn't about catching drivers out—it's about keeping them safe. A clear, well-communicated policy helps protect staff, reputations, and the public, especially when the temptation to overindulge is greater.

When it comes to impairment, prevention isn't just good practice—it's the only acceptable standard. ●

Multifleet Delivers Electric SUVs as Service Expands for St John Ambulance in Wales

Multifleet delivers electric SUVs as service expands for St John Ambulance in Wales Multifleet, which trades as runyourfleet and is based in Solihull, has provided the pair of Kia Niro SUVs on contract hire for use in a community project run by St John Ambulance Cymru.

The new vehicles come at the same time as runyourfleet's contract with St John has developed to level 3, the top level of fleet management, which means managing all aspects of the organisation's fleet of 85-plus ambulances, minibuses and support vehicles.

Benjamin Savage, chief operating officer at St John Ambulance Cymru, said: "We've found real value in the fleet management services provided by runyourfleet, who have proved themselves to be efficient and cost-effective.

"Most of our vehicles have been purchased, and we started with runyourfleet's fleet management at level 1, soon increasing it to level 2, and we have now agreed on a level 3 arrangement.



"This means runyourfleet really is taking the headache of fleet management away, allowing us to focus on what we're good at – first aid treatment, training and transport for communities across Wales.

"We've also taken delivery of two Kia Niro's on contract hire from runyourfleet, and there is the potential for this to expand, subject to our usual competitive tendering."

Luke Savage, key account manager at runyourfleet, explained how the outsourced fleet management with St John now included regular servicing, MoTs, the checking of driving licences and registration documents, leasing and

short-term rental.

Mr Savage said: "We've been able to show St John Ambulance Cymru the quality of services we offer, and we're delighted that our contract with them is now expanding.

"We have evolved from light-touch fleet management and specialist breakdown cover to supporting the business in all key areas of outsourced fleet management.

"We're also delighted to have started leasing vehicles for their community projects, something we supported with long term rental previously, and we hope to expand this over time."●

Fleetclear Named Supplier on Crown Commercial Service's New Telematics Framework

Fleet solutions provider Fleetclear has been confirmed as a supplier on the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) RM6353 Framework, covering Tyres, Glass, and Telematics.

Fleetclear is listed under Lot 4, which relates to vehicle telematics hardware, software, and associated products. The framework forms part of CCS's Fleet Category, providing public sector organisations with commercial arrangements supporting a Total Fleet Solution.

The updated framework offers a wide-ranging portfolio of telematics products

to help public sector fleets track and analyse vehicle data, improve efficiency, and optimise fleet, driver, and risk management. Fleetclear's full suite of products and services falls within the scope, including AI-driven solutions for monitoring driver behaviour and protecting staff working near live traffic lanes or operating bin lifting systems.

Additional offerings include:

- DVS compliance and vehicle safety technology
- Telematics and in-vehicle camera systems (DVR)
- Asset and vehicle tracking, Driver ID, and risk management solutions
- Fleet management software for waste management, winter maintenance, and other operational fleets

The previous RM6315 Vehicle Telematics

Solutions framework remains active until 4 March 2026.

Mike Crowther, Business Development Director at Fleetclear, said:

"We are delighted to continue as a named supplier on this comprehensive framework from CCS. It enables public sector organisations to procure essential vehicle and driver safety, monitoring, and tracking technology efficiently. We work closely with many UK public sector bodies and fully support CCS in helping these organisations achieve value for money while improving fleet safety and compliance."

Why Fleetclear? With over a decade of expertise providing proven solutions, Fleetclear helps fleets operate safely, efficiently, and responsibly. The company offers fully qualified in-house engineers, leading after-sales support, and comprehensive warranties, making Fleetclear a trusted fleet safety partner.●

Queclink Targets Fleet Safety and Compliance with High-Performance Dashcam

Queclink Wireless Solutions, a global provider of IoT devices and hardware, has launched its most powerful and flexible dashcam yet, which promises to boost fleet safety and compliance within the UK commercial fleet sector. The CV5000 is an AI-powered, dual-facing dashcam that supports up to two additional cameras for increased visibility around the vehicle or to handle complex video telematics applications.

"The CV5000 is a high-performance, all-in-one dashcam that has been developed to cope with the diverse requirements of the commercial fleet sector," explains Vernon Bonser, UK Sales Director of Queclink Wireless Solutions. *"It builds on the success of the CV200, launched at the beginning of last year, with significant enhancements in terms of camera options, AI functionality, positioning accuracy and system integration."*

The CV5000 comes with a forward-and-driver-facing camera as standard and then connects to an extensive range of auxiliary devices for side, rear and cargo views, making it a highly versatile dashcam solution. As a result, commercial fleet operators can benefit from a multi-camera system all through the all-in-



one device, taking advantage of true fleet and video telematics capabilities. Like previous models, the CV5000 boasts optional CAN bus integration to gain greater understanding of vehicle performance and usage.

AI detection enables real-time event recognition through advanced driver assistance system (ADAS), Driver Monitoring System (DMS) and Blind Spot Detection (BSD) functionality. The CV5000 can therefore be used to identify and alert on dangers such as lane departure, forward collision and nearby vulnerable road users (VRUs), along with driver distraction, fatigue and seatbelt use, with a facial ID feature for automated driver identification planned. It also incorporates a CMOS active pixel sensor with an independent image signal processor (ISP) for superior low-light performance and

TSR (Traffic Sign Recognition) support.

Enhanced GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) accuracy ensures the CV5000 delivers advanced tracking to less than one metre, while the large ceramic antenna ensures increased signal strength. Meanwhile, the dual MicroSD storage, supporting up to 1TB in total, enables long-duration, high-resolution recording to minimise the risk of data loss and for added peace of mind.

"As our new flagship device within our successful CV series, the CV5000 represents a significant step forward in dashcam technology. It is designed to meet the growing demand from road transport sector for intelligent and adaptable multi-camera systems that support advanced fleet and video telematics applications," adds Bonser. ●

Tech Investment Positions Nexus for Peak-Season Success

Nexus a leading B2B vehicle and plant hire provider, has strengthened its market-leading Iris® platform ahead of the 2025 peak period, ensuring clients benefit from faster, smarter and more efficient fleet solutions.

Already this year, Nexus has processed over 7,000 hire bookings, up nearly 20% year-on-year, as online retail growth

fuels rising logistics demand. To meet this surge, Nexus continues to leverage its unmatched network of 300+ supply partners, 550,000 vehicles, 2,000 branches and 24/7 booking and support.

Recent Iris® upgrades have boosted both efficiency and customer experience, including a new bulk group update tool that enables large-scale booking changes in seconds, reducing manual effort and errors.

Chief Operating Officer Gerry McCaig said: *"Our technology-first approach means continuously enhancing Iris® to support our*

customers and partners. These updates have helped us process record peak bookings quickly and accurately, maintaining the high service standards clients expect. It's a perfect example of our 'powered by tech, delivered by people' philosophy."

Iris® gives clients full visibility and control of all rentals in one place, supported by detailed management insights that help identify trends and inform sustainable decisions. With demand still climbing, Nexus remains focused on innovation, delivering the flexibility, reliability and scalability today's fleet rental market demands. ●



Geotab Survey: 91% of Professional UK Drivers are Ready to Embrace In-Cab AI Coaching

A new UK survey from Geotab, a global leader in connected vehicle and asset solutions, reveals that professional drivers have a clear vision for the future of in-cab technology, with 91% stating they would be more comfortable with instant audio coaching. This coaching would be based on an immediate, AI-powered analysis of in-cab video, instead of inward-facing video being stored for later review.

The study revealed that while nearly 9 out of 10 (87%) of UK employees are concerned about the use of in-cab cameras, 97% would be willing to overlook those concerns if footage could prove they were not at fault after a collision. The conflict suggests that drivers are not rejecting the technology, but are instead asking for clarity, fairness and practical value from the systems designed to support them.

The UK survey is part of a wider study conducted by Geotab of over 3,500 professional drivers across seven European countries, uncovering a fundamental "Privacy vs. Protection" dilemma at the heart of driver attitudes.

The study also revealed an "education gap" that UK fleet managers must address. Driver concerns are widespread and varied, with no single issue forming a majority. Worries about footage being used out of context (34%), being used against them for disciplinary action (34%) and data security (32%), are all significant. This illustrates the varied barriers to the adoption of video cameras, suggesting further education and information is required regarding their use.

"The narrative that drivers in the UK

are against technology is outdated" said Edward Kulperger, Senior Vice President, EMEA at Geotab. *"When drivers understand the value of the coaching and that it's designed to protect and develop them, rather than penalise them, acceptance rises dramatically. The industry has an opportunity to improve education on how these systems enhance driver safety and security, which will build a culture of trust and lead to safer roads for everyone."*

The UK transport sector continues to battle against driver shortages and operational pressures, with fleets turning to supportive technology, such as AI-powered coaching to enhance performance, confidence and safety. The latest data from Geotab's research underscores that UK drivers are not only open to this approach, but they are encouraging it. Across Europe, the UK also had the highest overall percentage of drivers (35%) who believed that dashcam footage for coaching is a valuable tool for both professional development and safety.

The survey confirms earlier findings from Geotab's driver research noting nearly 70% of drivers in Europe support adopting technology to enhance their performance. This new data notes that a combined 67% are positive about using footage for coaching, provided it is constructive and collaborative, with less than 1% of respondents stating they see no benefit at all in having a dashcam. When asked about the biggest benefits, drivers cited improving their own standards through coaching, increased security, and proving they were not at fault in a collision, further underlining their dual interest in both professional development and personal protection. ●

Autoglass® Launches Strategic Partnership with FleetCheck

Autoglass® has entered into an exclusive strategic partnership with FleetCheck fleet management software to provide enhanced automotive glass services and priority support.

The automotive glass specialist has joined FleetCheck's Affinity Services programme, created in 2020 to offer a range of enhanced essential fleet services to the company's more than 2,000-strong customer base.

FleetCheck CEO Peter Golding added: *"Affinity Services has agreements in place with 10 major service providers so far, ranging from motor insurance to driver training and maintenance to vehicle recovery."*

"Autoglass® will be our 11th and we are at present the only software-based fleet management company with which they have this kind of deal. Glass is an increasingly expensive and complex area for fleet operators as vehicle design and technology advances, and they will offer our users excellent value and priority access to services and outstanding expertise."

Andy Caine, business development manager at Autoglass®, added: *"We are delighted to be joining the FleetCheck Affinity Services programme. The company has an excellent reputation and can count some of the UK's most progressive and effective fleets among its customer base."*

"Our enhanced service commitment recognises the potential market that FleetCheck represents, with almost 300,000 vehicles being managed using its software. We plan to maximise our presence by offering dedicated account management and streamlined service delivery."

Autoglass® has more than 100 centres across the UK and 650 mobile units, providing complete national coverage.

Peter said: *"We're in the process of finalising further affinity partnerships which we'll announce in the near future. Our aim is to negotiate deals that bring genuine benefits enhanced service value to our customers as they look to contain rising fleet costs."* ●



Blakedale Opens New Snodland Site to Expand National Coverage

Blakedale, a leader in specialist traffic management and highway safety vehicles, has opened a new site in Snodland, Kent, strengthening its ability to serve the Northgate Group's southern customers.

The new facility will allow Blakedale to distribute a wide range of specialist vehicles to its southern customer base, with several vehicles available on-site. This includes 3.5t traffic management vehicles, Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs), 7.5t Arb Tippers, and 18t Impact Protection Vehicles (IPVs).

The site will also support customers of the wider Northgate Group, giving them easier access to Blakedale's specialist vehicles. Snodland is the first of six new distribution hubs set to open across the next year, significantly expanding Blakedale's national reach and ensuring customers can access specialist vehicles closer to where they operate.

The new branch builds on major recent investments at Blakedale's Chorley headquarters, which has been expanded to include four specialist vehicle build bays, a dedicated parts store, a commercial vehicle repair facility, and a brand-new HGV inspection pit with heavy-duty vehicle lifts.

These facilities allow Blakedale to deliver a complete end-to-end solution for specialist vehicle build and maintenance, including crash cushion inspection, servicing, and repairs.

This forms part of the group's One Road initiative, which provides customers of Northgate, Blakedale, FridgeXpress, and ChargedEV with a single point of contact for vehicle hire, fleet management, and electrification services.

Supported by a bodybuilder network, Blakedale completes approximately 350 conversions per year and operates a growing fleet of more than 1,000

vehicles nationwide.

Jon Taylor, Managing Director at Blakedale, said: "Opening in Snodland is a significant step in our growth journey. It ensures we can support our southern-based customers more effectively while also strengthening the Northgate Group's ability to deliver specialist vehicles as part of a fully integrated service." ●



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



Dennis Eagle Officially Opens New Technical Training Centre in Warwick

Dennis Eagle, the UK's industry leader in the design and manufacture of refuse collection vehicles (RCVs), is enhancing its training offering by opening a new Technical Training Centre in Warwickshire. Officially inaugurated on 21 October 2025, the new 4,900m² site combines practical and theoretical content to build confidence in and enrich the knowledge of RCV operators.

Located near the business' headquarters

in Warwick, the new facility will help customers derive greater value from their vehicles through in-depth operator instruction, safe working procedures, and preventative maintenance. A comprehensive programme of training courses extends across the company's full range of RCVs, specialist recycling vehicles, and bin lifting systems, providing both Dennis Eagle and Terberg Matec UK technical expertise from one centralised location.

"This evolutionary approach to training is a critical change for the future of our business," said Geoff Rigg, Aftermarket Director, Dennis Eagle. "The combination of expert-led theory with hands-on practical experience creates impactful, long-lasting value for our customers and ensures operators have the confidence to apply

what they learn out in the real world. Our unrivalled industry knowledge and firmly established heritage means there is no one better placed to provide enduring, high-quality training that helps develop sector-leading engineers."

Alongside the Technical Training Centre, the new building also houses multiple interactive spaces, a practical area, display area, and a customer handover space, helping to support the business' expanding production in the UK by increasing its operational capacity.

"The newly opened facility provides the footprint and scope to help bolster our growing operations and further enhance our customer proposition," said Keith Day, Managing Director, Dennis Eagle. "As well as increasing the space required to support production growth, it will allow us to showcase our world-class vehicle capability through interactive presentations, practical activities, and engaging environments, enabling customers to get hands-on with our products in a safe and controlled way. The expansion will act as an essential step forward in improving practical product knowledge and safety awareness among our customers and staff."

The expansion of the company's facilities is anticipated to create several new jobs in the local area, including roles for engineers, technicians, training, and administrative employees. Day added: *"As the UK's leading provider of innovative RCVs and specialist vehicles, this new building further demonstrates our commitment to investing in Warwick and the UK, supporting new jobs in the area, providing a positive boost to the economy, and continuing our vital work towards creating safer, cleaner communities."* ●



For more information about Dennis Eagle visit: www.dennis-eagle.co.uk



Epsom & Ewell Partnership with SFS Heading for 32 years

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has announced the award of a new 10-year contract for the supply and maintenance of a new fleet of vehicles to its long-standing fleet and workshop partner Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS), extending the partnership to an impressive 32 years.

SFS, which has a reputation for retaining its customers, started working with the council in 2005. This latest contract involves the delivery of approximately 75 replacement vehicles with the first vehicles arriving in June 2027. The new fleet includes 13 x 26T Refuse Collection Vehicles (RCVs), and a range of other vehicles to carry out services such as street cleansing and grounds maintenance. SFS will also continue to manage the council's workshop, which it extended and modernised in 2021, and the maintenance of vehicles.

Cllr Liz Frost, Chair of Environment & Safe Communities Committee, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council said: "We are delighted to continue the council's partnership with SFS. Over the past 20 years they have delivered a consistently high level of service and offer excellent value for money. Their expertise

in sourcing the right vehicle technology, managing the maintenance of vehicles and our workshop facility is excellent and we have no reason to look elsewhere. We work to a tight budget and there is no room for waste. SFS runs a tight ship, and the team are reliable, responsive and easy to deal with."

The new fleet will facilitate the council's weekly waste and recycling collection service, which includes co-mingled dry recycling, glass, food waste and general refuse. The Simply Weekly Recycling service was introduced in 2017 and led to an increase in recycling rates in the Borough.

Bob Sweetland, Managing Director, SFS: "This is fantastic news and we are thrilled to be retained for a 3rd consecutive contract term. 32 years is a significant milestone and we are very proud of our work with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council. This contract further reinforces our reputation as a steadfast and reliable local authority fleet and workshop partner. We work hard to understand our customers' operations in depth and future proof them for the longer term."

SFS has an extensive track record in delivering fleet and workshop management solutions to local authorities and currently operates a network of 15 workshops across the UK, 9 of which are based at council depots. The company operates its own specialist vehicle hire division, CTS Hire, for the provision of short to medium term municipal vehicles. ●



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council Celebrates Arrival of a New Fleet

The new fleet, supplied by long-term partner Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS), arrived at the end of September.

Seventeen bright green 26-tonne refuse collection vehicles are now in service, joined by two sweepers and three bulky waste trucks. The remaining nine specialist food waste vehicles will arrive by February 2026, ready for the launch of the council's new household waste service next spring. The service will include separate collections for garden, recycling, general, and food waste, with the latter used to generate renewable energy and cut emissions.

Earlier this year, HBBC signed a new eight-year agreement with SFS for fleet supply, maintenance, and workshop management. The contract, marking 20 years of partnership, extends the relationship to 2033 and was awarded via the Halton Housing National Vehicle Contract Hire and Flexi-Hire Framework.

Caroline Roffey, Assistant Director, Street Scene Services, said: "SFS have proved a reliable and trustworthy supplier, bringing valuable expertise across all their contracts."

SFS Managing Director Bob Sweetland added: "We're proud to have supported HBBC for over two decades and remain committed to investing in the council's fleet operations."

Councillor Lynda Hodgkins, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, said: "This partnership will enhance our waste management services and help reduce emissions. Running our HGV fleet on vegetable oil will cut vehicle carbon emissions by up to 90%." ●



For more information about Specialist Fleet Services visit: www.sfs.co.uk

KGM Motors UK Launches All-New Torres Hybrid: Efficient, Versatile, Fleet-Ready SUV

KGM Motors UK, formerly SsangYong, has introduced the all-new Torres Hybrid, completing its award-winning Torres SUV line-up alongside petrol and electric variants. Developed to deliver a balance of efficiency, capability, and practicality, the Hybrid model represents a key step in the brand's commitment to sustainable mobility and fleet-friendly vehicles.

Dual Tech Hybrid System: Efficiency Meets Performance

Developed in collaboration with BYD, the Torres Hybrid features the Dual Tech Hybrid System, a full hybrid setup that integrates electric and combustion power seamlessly. The system combines a 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine with dual electric motors, producing a combined 177 hp through a six-speed automatic e-DHT transmission. Multiple hybrid modes, including pure EV, series-parallel, and engine drive, enable smooth, quiet driving while optimising fuel economy for real-world use.

Kevin Griffin, Managing Director of KGM Motors UK, commented:

"The Torres Hybrid has been developed for customers seeking greater efficiency and practicality without compromise. It combines the benefits of hybrid technology with the strength and capability KGM vehicles are known for. For fleets, this model represents an important step in our transition toward more sustainable, cost-effective mobility solutions."

City and Motorway Driving: Smart Hybrid Operation

In urban areas, the Torres Hybrid operates in EV mode for up to 95% of driving, offering near-silent, zero-emission performance at low speeds.

On motorways, the system intelligently blends petrol and electric power to provide confident acceleration and efficiency, with all-electric operation possible up to 62 mph. A three-level regenerative braking system with smart traffic-adaptive control enhances energy recovery while reducing brake wear — a key advantage for high-mileage fleet vehicles.

Rugged Durability for Everyday Use

True to KGM's SUV heritage, the Torres Hybrid combines bold styling with robust engineering. Its waterproof chassis allows water fording of up to 300mm, while 78% high-tensile steel construction ensures class-leading durability in demanding conditions. A towing capacity of 1.3 tonnes, complemented by Trailer Stability Assist (TSA), adds further versatility for light commercial or field-based fleet operations.

Driver Comfort and Productivity

The Torres Hybrid's "slim and wide" cabin maximises space and usability for drivers. Dual 12.3-inch displays integrate the digital cluster and infotainment system via KGM's Athena 2.0 UX platform, offering seamless connectivity through Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and TomTom navigation. Heated and ventilated leather seats, dual-zone climate control, and 32-colour ambient lighting support driver comfort during long shifts.

Practical features, including a floating centre console, multiple USB-C ports, and generous storage, make the cabin highly functional. Luggage capacity reaches a class-leading 1,662 litres, supporting fleet operations that require flexible passenger or cargo transport.

Safety and Fleet Assurance

Safety is central to the Torres Hybrid, which comes equipped with eight airbags and a comprehensive suite of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS). These include Autonomous Emergency Braking, Lane Departure Warning, Lane Keeping Assist, Safety Distance Alert, Rear Blind Spot Detection, and Rear Cross Traffic Warning — all designed to enhance driver confidence and reduce accident risk in fleet environments.

Fleet-Focused Efficiency

The Torres Hybrid delivers CO₂ emissions of 139 g/km (WLTP), alongside strong real-world fuel economy, offering fleet managers a low-emission, cost-efficient solution that bridges the gap between petrol and full-electric powertrains. Its combination of hybrid efficiency, SUV robustness, and practical versatility makes it ideal for operators seeking reliability, comfort, and total cost-of-ownership advantages.

Availability and Fleet Potential

Available now across the UK, the Torres Hybrid reinforces KGM Motors UK's commitment to advanced, eco-friendly vehicles tailored for fleet and business use. With its intelligent hybrid system, durable SUV architecture, and class-leading features, the Torres Hybrid is well-positioned for urban commuting, field operations, and mixed-use fleet applications.

For fleet operators, the all-new KGM Torres Hybrid represents a compelling proposition: a vehicle that merges hybrid efficiency with SUV capability, maximising driver comfort, safety, and productivity while reducing running costs and environmental impact. ●





UK Driver Fines Reach Record Highs, Fleet Data Shows

Driver fines across the UK have surged 23% since 2019, according to new analysis from Ayvens, a leading fleet management company. In 2024, Ayvens processed 248,301 fines – the highest number on record – highlighting a significant increase in penalties for fleet drivers over the past five years.

The data reveals a steady climb in fines since the pandemic: from 156,311 fines in 2020 to 193,011 in 2021, rising further to 243,610 in 2023, before reaching the 2024 peak. Seasonal spikes are evident, with March, October, and December consistently the months with the highest fine volumes, reflecting periods of increased fleet activity.

Most Common Fines for Fleet Drivers

Analysis of the fines shows a clear pattern in offences:

- Parking charge notices (PCNs): Overstays or non-payment in council and private car parks.
- Speeding tickets: From roadside cameras or police enforcement.
- Moving traffic PCNs (CCTV): Entering bus lanes, stopping in box junctions, or making banned turns.
- Notice to Owner (NTO): Follow-up letters for unpaid PCNs.
- Toll road charges: Failure to pay toll fees.

“Fines Are More Than Admin”

Suzanne Phillips, Head of Specialist Sales at Ayvens UK, explains the wider implications:

“Fines aren’t just administrative burdens – they often signal broader risks. A rise in fines can indicate unsafe driving, unsuitable vehicles, or gaps in driver training. Drivers with poor fine records are also more likely to return vehicles with higher damage levels and above-average mileage. This translates



Picture credit: The Mersey Gateway

directly into higher operating costs and increased insurance premiums for fleets.”

Top Hotspots for Fleet Fines

Ayvens’ analysis identifies the UK’s most frequent fine locations for fleet drivers:

Rank	Location	Total Fines
1	Dartford Crossing	8,173
2	Mersey Gateway Bridge	2,414
3	Blackwall Tunnel	1,896
4	Manchester Airport	1,718
5	Heathrow Airport	1,336
6	Manchester	1,210
7	Stansted Airport	1,151
8	Luton Airport	901
9	Gatwick Airport	731
10	Rotherhithe Tunnel	662

The Dartford Crossing in the Southeast tops the list, followed by the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Blackwall Tunnel. Airport zones also feature prominently, reflecting the challenges of congested urban and travel hubs for fleet operators.

Preventing Fines Through Data and Training

Phillips notes that fleets can take practical steps to reduce fines and associated costs: “Simple measures such as targeted driver training, smarter route planning, and ensuring vehicles are fit for purpose can make a real difference. Technology and data take this even further. By linking fine history with end-of-contract inspections

through our TCO+ platform, we can spot patterns early and help fleets predict and prevent future costs.”

For fleet managers, the message is clear: monitoring fines is not just about compliance. It’s about risk management, operational efficiency, and cost control. Using data-driven insights to identify high-risk drivers or routes can support safer driving behaviour, reduce vehicle damage, and ultimately lower total cost of ownership.

Key Takeaways for Fleet Operators

- Driver fines in the UK have increased sharply, reaching record levels in 2024.
- Parking, moving traffic, and toll offences are the most common violations.
- Peak fine months coincide with periods of high fleet activity.
- Specific locations, such as the Dartford Crossing and urban airports, are hotspots for fleet penalties.
- Proactive measures – including driver training, route optimisation, and vehicle suitability checks – are essential to reduce risks.
- Data platforms like TCO+ enable predictive insights, helping fleets manage costs and improve safety.

By addressing these areas, fleet operators can protect their bottom line, reduce insurance premiums, and ensure safer, more efficient fleet operations. ●



Škoda Strengthens Emergency Services Presence with Fourth-Generation Superb Estate Approval

Škoda is reinforcing its reputation as a trusted partner for the UK's emergency services following official approval of the fourth-generation Superb Estate. Over the past two decades, Škoda models have become a familiar sight on Britain's roads, relied upon by police, ambulance, and fire crews for their ability to perform under demanding conditions.

The Škoda Superb SportLine Estate 2.0 TSI 265PS DSG 4x4 has successfully completed the Metropolitan Police's rigorous brake test, securing approval for operational deployment across the force. This latest generation builds on the legacy of its predecessor, which was widely used in specialist roles, including motorway patrol, armed response, and even fully armoured high-security applications.

Performance, Space, and Practicality

The Superb Estate combines performance and practicality for emergency operations. Its 0–62mph sprint in just 5.7 seconds and top speed of 155mph ensures rapid response capability, while the 690-litre boot, extendable to 1,920 litres with seats folded, provides ample room for essential equipment. High payload capacity, ranging from 512 to 652kg, adds versatility for demanding fleet duties.

Advanced Safety and Fleet Features

Emergency service personnel benefit from a host of standard technologies, including LED Matrix beam headlights, Blind Spot Detection with door exit warning, Dynamic Chassis Control Plus, Tri-zone climate control, Crew Protect Assist, rear-view camera, and Progressive Dynamic Steering.

The Metropolitan Police Brake Test, widely regarded as the industry's toughest evaluation, replicates high-speed emergency scenarios and repeated full stops, pushing all vehicle systems to their limits. Passing this test highlights the Superb Estate's durability and readiness for duty from day one.

A Legacy of Reliability

Škoda's partnership with UK emergency services spans over 20 years. The Octavia has long been a fleet favourite for its balance of performance, space, and efficiency, while the Superb is valued for long-range motorway duties. More recently, Kodiaq and Enyaq models have added SUV versatility and electrified options, performing reliably in both urban and rural environments. This enduring track record cements Škoda as one of the UK's most trusted names in emergency service mobility. ●

For more information on Škoda Emergency Services fleet models, visit: www.skoda.co.uk/fleet/emergency-services

Škoda Develops new Cargo Commercial Variant

Škoda UK has developed a new addition to its award-winning Enyaq range in the form of a commercial Cargo variant. The new model, which has been developed with conversion specialists Strong's Plastic Products Ltd, will be available exclusively to fleet customers via Škoda's Area Fleet Managers.

The Enyaq Cargo is officially registered from new as an LCV with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and was initially created as part of a project commissioned by National Grid Energy Distribution (NGED) in 2024. The operator has taken 70 Enyaq Cargo models, with plans to further decarbonise its fleet of service vehicles as older models are replaced. NGED currently operates more than 300 fully electric commercial vans and 600 electric company cars, making it one of the biggest EV fleets in the UK.

Based on the Enyaq 85 and 85x models, the new Enyaq Cargo combines all-wheel-drive capability with a purpose-built interior designed for maximum practicality. The spacious load area is constructed using high-strength, low-weight plastic materials to meet stringent safety standards without compromising efficiency. A robust yet lightweight bulkhead separates the cabin from the cargo space, ensuring both safety and comfort. Developed in collaboration with conversion specialists, the Enyaq Cargo offers a range of flexible configurations tailored to meet the unique storage and operational needs of business customers. In creating the final specification for the Cargo, Strong's worked with Škoda UK and the DVSA to ensure full compliance

with LCV regulations. Thanks to long driving ranges, fast DC rapid charging and all-wheel drive, the Enyaq is the perfect model to cater for a range of business needs.

The Enyaq Cargo is derived from the Edition 85, and all-wheel-drive SportLine 85x passenger models, which offer a WLTP combined range of 359 miles and 332 miles, respectively. Both variants support DC rapid charging, with the Enyaq 85 capable of charging at up to 135 kW and the 85x at 175 kW - allowing a 10–80% charge in around 28 minutes.

Although Škoda models have been adapted for commercial use in the



past, this is the first time a battery electric model has been offered. The Enyaq Cargo is available exclusively to fleet customers.●



To learn more about the ŠKODA range, visit: www.skoda.co.uk

Bridgnorth Community First Responders Celebrate 25 Years with New Dacia Duster Emergency Vehicle

Bridgnorth Community First Responders (CFR) are marking 25 years of life-saving service with the addition of a new Dacia Duster Extreme 4x4 to their fleet, enhancing their ability to reach patients across the rural landscapes of Shropshire.

The volunteer-led organisation was founded in 2001 as part of an initiative to support ambulance services in remote areas, and has since grown into an essential lifeline for the local community. Its eleven-strong team of volunteers, trained by West Midlands Ambulance Service in advanced first aid, respond to 999 emergencies across Bridgnorth and surrounding villages, delivering critical care in the vital minutes before an ambulance arrives.

Over the past quarter-century, the group has built a reputation for reliability and dedication. With rural calls often involving challenging terrain, unpredictable

weather, and urgent response times, the first responders' fleet has become as crucial to their operations as the volunteers themselves. To mark this milestone and meet the increasing demand for rapid-response support, Bridgnorth CFR has invested in a new Dacia Duster Extreme 4x4, replacing a decade-old vehicle that had served the team faithfully.

A Practical and Reliable Choice for Rural Operations

David Yates, Chairman and First Responder at Bridgnorth CFR, explains the decision: "As we're often called to remote locations in all weathers, we realised we needed a more reliable and capable four-wheel-drive vehicle. The Duster met all our requirements. It's rugged enough to handle the countryside, affordable for our charity-run scheme, and economical to run. It's also become a real talking point at community events!"

The new Duster is fitted to support rapid emergency response, equipped to carry essential medical equipment and designed for both speed and accessibility on rural roads. Its combination of capability, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness makes it ideal for the unique demands of volunteer responder operations.

The vehicle was sourced through Budgen Motors and secured thanks to a combination of grant funding and in-kind support, allowing the group to remain within budget while upgrading a critical asset for their service.

Powered by Volunteers, Fuelled by Community Spirit

Bridgnorth CFR operates entirely on volunteer effort, with no regular government funding. Volunteers come from all walks of life – from engineers and healthcare professionals to retired teachers – united by a commitment



to supporting their community. Their dedication has seen the team respond to over 70 emergency calls so far this year, already surpassing last year's total.

The organisation also plays a key role in community engagement, offering first aid advice, promoting safety awareness, and participating in local events. The arrival of the Duster not only strengthens operational capacity but also serves as a visible reminder of the team's ongoing commitment to Bridgnorth and its surrounding areas.

Manufacturer Support for Lifesaving Work

Luke Broad, Dacia Brand Director for the UK, commented on the partnership: *"The team's dedication to their community over the past 25 years is truly inspiring, and we're honoured to support them with a vehicle that's built for reliability, capability, and value. It's exactly what their challenging role demands."*

The Dacia Duster is well-suited to Bridgnorth CFR's operational needs, offering four-wheel drive, rugged durability, and low running costs – all critical for a volunteer-led organisation responding to emergencies across a largely rural area. Its introduction ensures the team can continue providing rapid, life-saving support safely and efficiently.

Looking Forward

As Bridgnorth Community First



Responders celebrate this significant milestone, the new vehicle represents more than just a fleet upgrade; it's a symbol of the enduring partnership between local communities, volunteer organisations, and supportive manufacturers. For fleet managers, the story demonstrates the value of choosing vehicles that balance capability, reliability, and cost-efficiency – particularly in

roles where time, terrain, and access are critical factors.

With 25 years of service behind them and a strengthened fleet asset, Bridgnorth CFR is well-positioned to continue delivering vital emergency response across Shropshire for years to come, reinforcing the impact that a dedicated volunteer fleet can have on community health and safety.●



To learn more about the DACIA range, visit: www.dacia.co.uk



Isuzu UK Unveils the New D-Max V-Cross Commercial

Isuzu UK has introduced the new Isuzu D-Max V-Cross Commercial, a premium pick-up engineered specifically for fleet and business use.

Crafted for professional operators across construction, utilities, and SME fleets, the new model combines the comfort and refinement of the flagship V-Cross with full commercial compliance and long-term operational benefits.

Purpose-Designed for Professional Fleets

Built specifically for business purposes, the V-Cross Commercial is based on the award-winning D-Max V-Cross Double Cab and has been expertly modified into a dedicated two-seat commercial vehicle. The rear cabin area has been permanently converted into a secure



load compartment, ensuring the vehicle's classification and compliance for commercial use.

Each model features a comprehensive, business-ready specification, including a lightweight commercial canopy, tow bar with electrics, load bed liner, tinted rear door windows, and rugged seat protection. The exclusive "Commercial" badging clearly marks the vehicle within fleet operations, emphasising its professional identity.

Trusted Strength and Performance

Maintaining the dependable capability of the D-Max platform, the V-Cross Commercial offers a 1-tonne payload, 3.5-tonne towing capacity, and

permanent four-wheel drive. Features such as Rough Terrain Mode and a rear differential lock provide optimal traction and stability in difficult conditions—from construction sites and agricultural settings to off-road routes.

Fleet Efficiency and Legislation Compliance

The V-Cross Commercial retains full commercial vehicle classification, helping businesses stay compliant with evolving UK legislation for double and extended cab pick-ups. It also qualifies for capital allowances, ensuring ongoing cost-efficiency and making it a smart, future-ready option for fleets aiming to optimise operational budgets while maintaining



prolonged periods.

Reliability and Lifecycle Value

All V-Cross Commercial models come with Isuzu's five-year/125,000-mile warranty and five years of UK and European roadside assistance, ensuring

minimal downtime and confidence in residual value for fleet managers. With a kerb weight under 2,040kg, they also benefit from passenger car speed limits on motorways and dual carriageways, supporting productivity and efficient travel.

Alan Able, Managing Director at Isuzu UK, stated:

"The New Isuzu D-Max V-Cross Commercial has been crafted with business and fleet operators at its core. It combines the rugged capabilities that Isuzu is known for with the comfort and technology today's fleets demand. By maintaining full commercial classification, we're offering a vehicle that not only performs reliably in demanding environments but also provides real operational and financial benefits for fleet customers."●

premium standards.

Interior Comfort and Tech for High-Usage Drivers

Understanding that fleet drivers often spend long hours behind the wheel, the V-Cross Commercial features a high-spec interior designed for comfort and safety. Standard features include leather

upholstery, dual-zone climate control, a wireless 9-inch infotainment system with Apple CarPlay™ and Android Auto™, and a 7-inch Multi-Information Display. USB-C connectivity and an upgraded ADAS suite—featuring Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control and Traffic Jam Assist—enhance safety and driver wellbeing over



To learn more about the **ISUZU** range, visit: www.isuzu.co.uk



Renault Trafic E-Tech

The Renault Trafic E-Tech 100% electric is a durable, highly configurable medium van designed to help fleet operators decarbonise without compromising on load capacity, payload, or real-world usability.

It fills a crucial gap in the UK electric van market—particularly with its rare high-roof option in the mid-size LCV segment, providing a versatile solution for operators seeking to transition to a zero-emission fleet.

Built for Real-World Work

Available in two body lengths and two roof heights, the Trafic E-Tech offers impressive load flexibility:

- L1 (5.08 m) and L2 (5.48 m) lengths
- H1 (1.967 m) and H2 (2.498 m) heights
- Load volumes ranging from 5.8 m³ to 8.9 m³
- Up to 4.15 m internal load length with load-through bulkhead
- Towing capacity of up to 920 kg
- Rear and side door access configurations available

Electric Performance That

Supports Uptime

Powered by a 52 kWh lithium-ion battery, the Trafic E-Tech delivers up to 186 miles (WLTP) of range—ideal for local and regional operations.

- 50 kW DC rapid charging enables a full recharge in around one hour
- Optional 22 kW AC charging supports faster depot-based charging
- Regenerative braking and Eco mode extend driving range in city traffic

A Mobile Workspace On the Move

Designed to function as an efficient mobile office, the interior offers 88 litres of in-cab storage and a fold-down centre seat with table for paperwork, tablets, or admin tasks.

Standard features include:

- Height-adjustable driver's seat with armrest and lumbar support.
- 8-inch Easy Link touchscreen with Android Auto™ and Apple CarPlay®.
- USB connectivity.
- Automatic climate control.
- Full LED headlights.
- Ergonomic seating for all-day comfort.

Safety and Driver Assistance

The Trafic E-Tech is equipped with driver-focused safety features as standard, helping reduce fatigue and increase protection during urban and motorway driving:

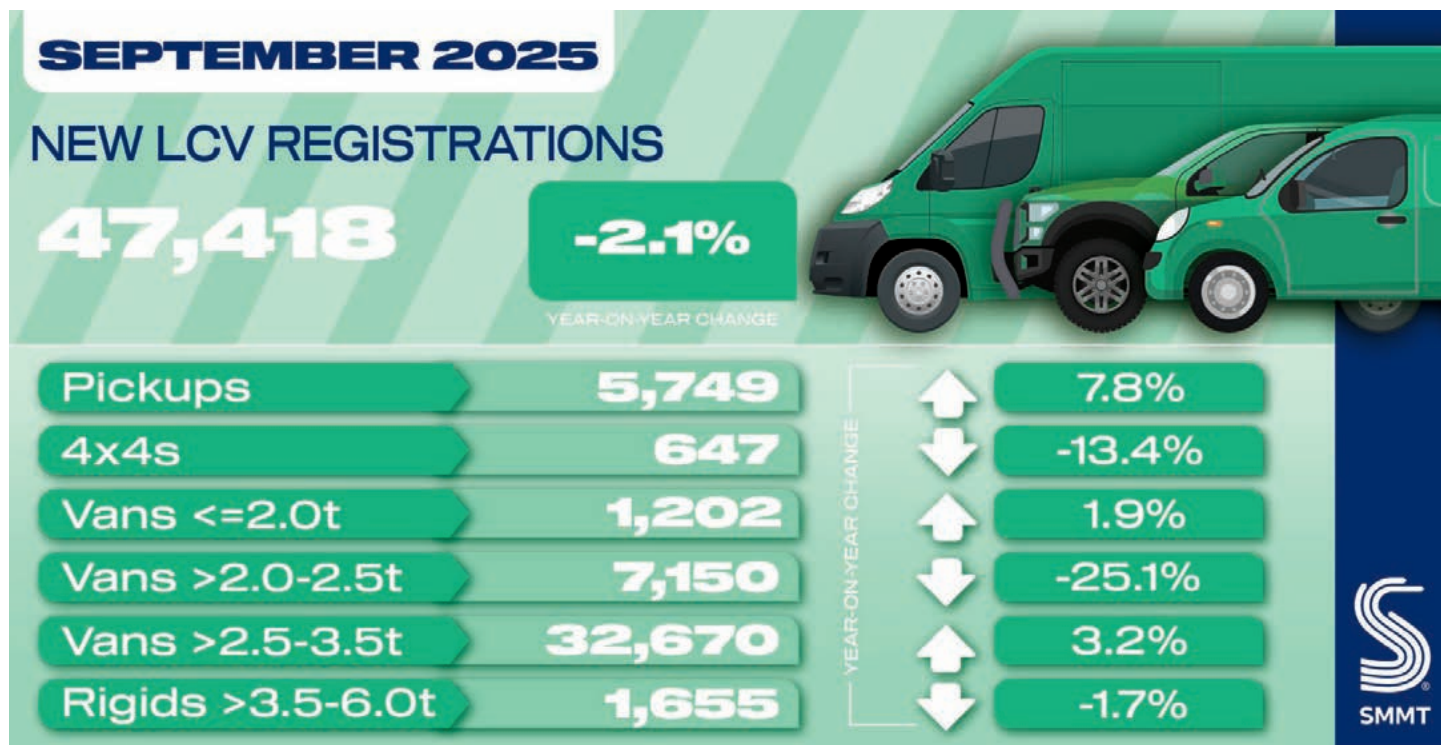
- Cruise control with speed limiter.
- Rear parking sensors.
- Lane departure warning.
- Active emergency braking.
- Driver attention monitoring.
- Tyre Pressure Monitoring System.

Optional upgrades include a 360° parking sensor suite, rear-view camera, blind spot monitoring, automatic high beam assist, and rain-sensing wipers.

Fleet-Ready from Day One

As part of the Renault Pro+ commercial range, the Trafic E-Tech is fully adaptable for operational use. Pre-wiring for conversions, multiple door and glazing options, and access to Renault's growing network of EV-ready workshops and telematics tools make it a smart investment for fleet managers prioritising uptime, sustainability, and operational flexibility. ●

To learn more about the **RENAULT** van range, visit: <https://business.renault.co.uk>



New Van Demand Slightly Declines in September But Records Best Month Ever for EV Adoption

UK deliveries of new light commercial vehicles (LCVs) fell by 2.2% in 'new numberplate' September, with 47,418 vans, pickups, and 4 x 4 s registered, according to the latest figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The modest drop continues the downward trend seen in 2025, with registrations down 9.9% year-to-date, reflecting a challenging economic environment and weak business confidence. However, this is the smallest decrease this year and remains above pre-pandemic levels, offering a positive sign during one of the market's busiest months – as van manufacturers continue to invest heavily in bringing cutting-edge, zero-emission models to market.

Segment performance was mixed, with the overall decline softened by a rise in deliveries of the largest vans, up 3.2% to 32,670 units – the largest segment by volume, accounting for nearly seven in ten (68.9%) registrations. Demand for new pickups and smaller vans also increased, up

7.8% and 1.9% to 5,749 and 1,202 units respectively, as earlier new pickup orders were delivered before the government's new fiscal measures on double-cabs applied to orders placed after April. Medium-sized van uptake fell by 25.1%, to 7,150 units, while 4 x 4 uptake declined by 13.4%, to 647 units.

New electric van (EV) registrations continued their strong upward trend, rising 41.1% year-on-year to 4,262 units – the highest ever recorded in a single month, capturing a market share of 8.9%. Year-to-date BEV volumes now stand at 22,118 units – up 55.9% on 2024 – representing 9.1% of all new registrations. This growth is impressive amid a challenging year for the overall market but remains well below the 16% share mandated for 2025. Manufacturers are driving this growth, investing heavily in electric van models, with over 40 options now available to fleet operators.

The extension of the Plug-in Van Grant and the recent Depot Charging Scheme will support operators in making the switch, but achieving mandated targets depends on boosting operator confidence and

ensuring access to suitable charging infrastructure. The transition must be accessible for all new buyers, including those requiring van-compatible charging at public, on-street, and overnight locations. Given that depots could face grid connection waits of up to 15 years, urgent priority for planning approval is essential – similar to the support given to data centres and wind farms – so that businesses can plan for a smooth and timely transition of their fleet operations.●

"September is one of the busiest months for the new van market so a slight dip in volumes compared with previous strong years is disappointing but unsurprising. The growth in electric van uptake is hugely encouraging, but the market is under pressure to deliver the investment necessary for decarbonisation. Manufacturers are delivering a huge choice of models to suit all businesses – now we need better dedicated infrastructure and continuing incentives to drive the switch."

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive●

To learn more about SMMT visit: www.smmt.co.uk/

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