



ESSENTIAL FLEET MANAGER *Magazine*

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

ISSUE 8
2025

Special Feature: Vehicle Hire

Fleet in Focus:
Lancashire County Council



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THINKING AHEAD

Supplier Insight: FMG (Pages 26 - 27)

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Essential Fleet Manager - Issue 8 (2025)

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

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Technology Predictions for 2026

As the year comes to an end, Essential Fleet Manager Magazine reached out to leading technology specialists for their 2026 forecasts. They offered insights into future innovations and trends expected to shape the industry in the coming year and the potential implications for essential service fleet operators.



Optimising Claims to Meet Increasing Cost and Time Challenges

Scott Greenhill, CEO, Agile Developments

Fleet Managers face higher insurance and claim costs and longer repair cycles because of time and resource constraints impacting the effectiveness of their claims management. Industry research suggests that a collision reported 24 hours late will increase costs by around £1,500 – a figure that is likely to increase to over £2,000 in 2026 – and average wait and repair times continue to increase with vehicles off the road for weeks. To avoid spiralling costs, excessive time pressures and damaging operational downtime, vehicle operators need robust, responsive, and accurate systems that streamline the reporting process for both the driver and fleet manager. This will undoubtedly require greater levels of digitisation and the adoption of AI-powered, app-based solutions that deliver advanced data capture and reporting, while enabling faster decision-making and improved results.

Find out more visit: <https://agileclaim.app>



Shaping a Proactive Model for Effective Collision Reduction

Nigel Lawrence, Strategic Partnerships Director, Applied Driving

We are predicting a growing focus from fleets to develop the use of data from technology solutions like cameras and telematics to offer improved insights around behaviours. Using these insights will enable fleets to deliver training targeting the relevant behaviours. Training must focus on root cause, understanding why behaviours occur and how to mitigate them, not necessarily focused on skills, but more around driver thought processes and how these can be influenced positively. Only by overlaying existing telematics tools – in-cab coaching, driver scoring, league tables – with automated behavioural education and training, will fleets be able to see a long-term continuous improvement and a measurable return on investment.

Find out more visit: www.applied-driving.com



Technology Is Key to Eliminating Smartphone Distraction

Mark Hadley, CEO, Blackout Technologies

Illegal mobile phone use is still widespread, with nine in ten drivers admitting they are unable to complete a journey without touching their device. There is no indication that existing penalties are enough of a deterrent, so we can expect a growing realisation amongst fleets, insurers and police forces that technology is key to preventing many road injuries and deaths linked to smartphone distraction. The use of advanced CCTV and AI-powered camera systems to detect drivers using a device behind the wheel will certainly increase. Mobile phone blocking tools will also provide essential fleets with the means to tackle the problem at root by stopping illegal usage in the first place, as well as offering a non-intrusive alternative to driver-facing AI cameras where privacy concerns exist.

Find out more visit: www.blackout-technologies.com/fleet



Smarter Telematics to Enhance User Experience and Provide Added Choice

Steve Thomas, Managing Director, Ctrack UK

Fleet and video telematics has been proven technology for some time, capable of improving road safety and reducing road risk, while helping to achieve a host of performance and efficiency improvements. However, challenges remain in terms of data protection laws, driver privacy concerns and information overload, so telematics will continue to evolve to meet the changing demands of fleets and their drivers. Growing configurability and integration across both software and hardware will be critical to ensure systems can take a holistic approach and achieve greater levels of personalisation. This added flexibility and choice will enable fleets to gain better driver buy-in, meet legislative compliance and realise continued improvement. Increased automation will also save time and effort for fleet managers and other users of the technology.

Find out more visit: <https://ctrack.com/uk>



Taking Route Optimisation to the Next Level

Colin Ferguson, CEO, Optimize

Essential fleets now require smarter planning and scheduling that takes into account a greater number of business and operational considerations than ever before. As a result, route optimisation is evolving rapidly, driven by AI-powered algorithms, to deliver highly adaptive, configurable and automated solutions. Dynamic routing now enables continuous real-time enhancements, based on changing requirements and conditions, while Mobile and Transient Hubs (MATHs) optimisation supports the use of temporary and vehicle-based storage capacity. With a growing number of mixed fleets, any planning tool must also account for EV-specific needs, such as charging station locations, battery levels and energy efficiency, as well as the weight-to-discharge ratio. Advances in AI and machine learning are now building on proven techniques to take us beyond current route optimisation capabilities and traditional fleet management.

Find out more visit: <https://optimizenow.ai/>



Transforming Asset Management with Smaller, Smarter Telematics

Niclas Holm, CEO, Postrack Europe

As asset tracking advances, fleet customers are seeking more than just location. They desire higher utilisation, fewer losses and the ability to avoid unnecessary inventory costs. The continued move to smaller, more affordable and capable trackers is making this achievable, so operators will be able to better manage smaller assets – such as trailers, plant, machinery, roll cages, bins and tools – that were previously too costly to monitor. This means they will be able to track more equipment with less capital to discover hidden capacity, eliminate unauthorised usage and recover lost or stolen items. Indoor tracking further broadens the scope and potential, using GPS, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi for full visibility across depots, warehouses, yards and customer sites, while integration with sensors is making it possible to view in real-time temperature, humidity and doors.

Find out more visit: <https://postrack.co.uk/>



Hardware Connectivity Driving Fleet, Asset and Video Telematics

Vernon Bonser, UK Sales Director, Queclink Wireless Solutions

The continued evolution of telematics is being made possible by the ever-increasing capabilities of tracking and camera hardware. Connectivity will continue to progress, which will provide greater scope than ever before to use the technology in new and clever ways. 5G and satellite communications will play a crucial role moving forward in delivering faster and more reliable data transfer between hardware and software, supporting higher quality data storage, analysis, and remote monitoring. Meanwhile, Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE), RFID and WiFi connectivity will enable the integration of a growing range of tools and devices for unified fleet, asset and safety management.

Find out more visit: www.queclink.com



Unlocking the Potential of AI Video Telematics

Justin White, European Managing Director, SureCam

AI video telematics will start to become accepted technology due to the proven safety benefits it can deliver, but adoption will rely on addressing driver privacy concerns and avoiding data overload. The key to success will be overcoming any opposition through privacy-focused safeguards and transparent data practices that increase driver visibility into what is collected and why. The fleet manager will also need to cut through the avalanche of associated alerts. This can be achieved by giving the driver a chance to self-correct; configuring the system to prioritise the biggest opportunities; and automating engagement and coaching responses. By balancing trust with proactive risk management, fleets can reduce dangerous driver events by 70% and reduce serious vehicle collisions by over 20%.

Find out more visit: <https://surecam.com>



Richard Pelly, Director,
Pellys Transport & Regulatory Law

The Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain: Annual Report to the Secretary of State 2024-2025

In my article for the October edition of the Magazine I mentioned in passing the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain: Annual Report to the Secretary of State 2024-2025 to highlight the importance that is placed on the Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Guidance Documents.

With Christmas on the horizon – potentially blocked from view by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget statement to the House of Commons and the challenges that those in the

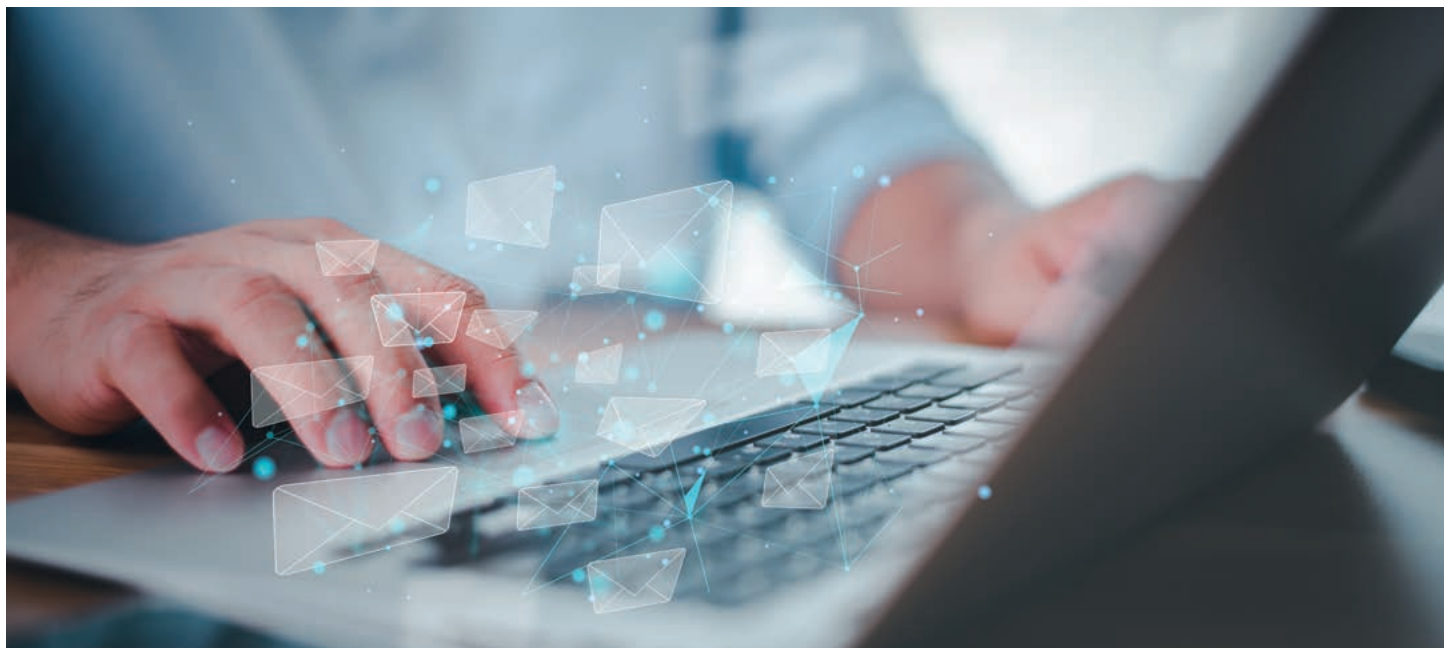
transport industry must face and which show no signs of abating – I wanted to offer a little comic relief by referencing another section of the Annual Report in which the Senior Traffic Commissioner concludes his Forward stating:

"As I pass the baton to Kevin Rooney, I cannot offer much that he does not already know. I can suggest one survival technique when moments of sanity are desired – frequent reference to the amusing lessons in Civil Service Mandarin authored by Martin Stanley."

For those unfamiliar with Mr. Stanley's lessons I reproduce them below (it is with some embarrassment that I recall those occasions when Traffic Commissioners have expressed surprise, concern and disappointment at my submissions in cases before them!).

Lesson 1: Mandarins always appear straightforward, friendly and helpful when offering an opinion, asking you to do something, and so on. Do not be taken in! The following translations will help you understand what they really mean.

COMMENT	MEANING
Advice Please !	I don't have a clue what to do with this. See also Give me a steer on that and Run it past me.
A few thoughts ...	Thank you for showing me this piece of work. It is utter rubbish for the following reasons.
As appropriate	As in "please deal with this as you consider appropriate") You may bin this, but don't blame me if you are found out.
Blind copy	None of the official recipients know that you have a copy of this sensitive note, therefore you cannot possibly contribute. But see "For Information" – you'll be blamed when it all goes wrong
CC-ing (as in "can you cc me into that)	Copy lists can be used in a number of subtle ways. Senior staff can ask to be added to a cc list to ensure that a junior person does not receive full credit for an idea, as it will then look like their idea. Or junior staff can add senior colleagues as a way of ensuring that they are blamed for a very stupid idea.
Concerned (as in "I was concerned to hear")	A senior official is about to explode.
Disappointed	Used by senior officials to express the view that a particular junior official is quite possibly the most incompetent person it has ever been their misfortune to come across. Particularly devastating if used in conjunction with "concerned" and/or "surprised".
Draft please!	Please graft for hours producing a coherent and impressive letter so that I can fulfil my teacher-fantasy by needlessly amending it.
Final draft	The first version on which anyone senior bothers to comment, as they can't be bothered to look at the five previous drafts.
For information	Don't even think of commenting on this but if anything goes wrong I'll remind everyone you knew what was going on.
Give me a steer on that	I don't know how to decide on this one. Please make a decision for me and I'll nick any good ideas you have.
Happy to discuss	There's a whole lot more here than meets the eye and that I haven't told you. Should ring alarm bells.
Hope this is helpful	I'm well aware that it is not helpful at all. Please don't contact me again.
I would be interested in your views on this	This is a load of rubbish but as it emanates from a senior official I want you to be the first to say so.
Please deal!	Do all the work on this yourself.



Please do not hesitate to contact me	Please do not ever contact me again. If you really insist, try in two weeks time when I am on leave.
(I have) Reservations	"If you do this then you're an even bigger fool than I thought." (Nicholas Bevan reported that he had in 1973 taken the minutes of a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister that discussed a paper prepared by officials. Mr Heath opened the discussion by describing the paper as "f***ing awful". After taking advice from colleagues, Mr Bevan recorded the Prime Minister as having 'expressed reservations' about the paper.)
Run it past me	I don't really know the answer but obviously can't admit to it – so can you help me and then I'll incorporate your excellent ideas and take all the credit.
Seeking your agreement	Preparation is at an advanced stage, or it's already happening. If you have any concerns, no-one wants to hear them.
Thank you for bringing this to my attention	"Damn, I hoped nobody was going to mention that/find out about that."
Thinking Outside the Box	A favourite used by bosses who want to patronise staff into action. It means "don't be so boring:- Come up with something other than a briefing note and photo call!"
Up To Speed (as in "Are you up to speed?")	Have you got a brain? Very vague term which is often used as a way to catch you out. If you admit to being up to speed you can be asked devilishly complicated questions. However, if you admit to not being up to speed you are made to look a fool as if you are not even able to grasp a short introduction to a simple issue.
Watching Brief (maintain a)	Used when you are not in the lead on a subject but senior officials will expect you to know something about it.
We spoke.	Lets other people know that we have spoken and have a plan, but not what that plan is. (Always followed by a full stop.)
(I would) Welcome Views (on this)	Does anyone have any ideas – I don't - although I want to appear very consultative. See also "Get a steer", "Advice please" and "Run it past me".
You may recall	You will if you are any good.
You will recall that	No you won't.
You will wish to be aware	No you won't, it's bad news I'm afraid.
You may wish to consider (doing this)	Do this or else!
You Should Be Aware	Even worse news – not my fault, honest.

...Cont'd on page 8 ↓

...Cont'd from page 07 ↗



Lesson 2: Mandarins work to a different clock and calendar than the rest of the population. Here is a brief introduction.

COMMENT	MEANING
Advice Please !	I don't have a clue what to do with this. See also Give me a steer on that and Run it past me.
Bring Forward (as in "Please BF these papers")	I would like to see these papers again in due course. (See below for a translation of this other very useful phrase.)
Deadlines	Close Of Play (often abbreviated to "cop"):- The deadline is vaguely at the end of the day – resulting in several more e-mails to establish exactly what the actual deadline is. Also strengthens the fraternity against non-cricketing colleagues.
In the New Year	By Easter.
In the Spring	By 30 June.
In the summer	By 30 September or (if really desperate) by mid-October when Parliament resumes.
In the Autumn	By Christmas.
Around the end of the Year	By end-February.
Holding reply	Forgot to do a Minister's case or "treat official"? Quick! Draft a letter explaining how complex the issue is and that you're consulting colleagues. Gives you another month not to do it in. See also "interim report".
You Should Be Aware	Even worse news – not my fault, honest.

To these wry insights one could add two observations from the Yes Minister series written by Jonathan Lynn and Anthony Jay: *"clarification is not to clarify things. It is to put one's self in the clear"* and *"It is the law of Inverse Relevance: the less you intend to do about something, the more you have to keep talking about it."*

Finally, one should always be cautious of anyone uttering the phrase *'with respect'* – they may mean many things, but intending to offer genuine respect will not be one of them.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

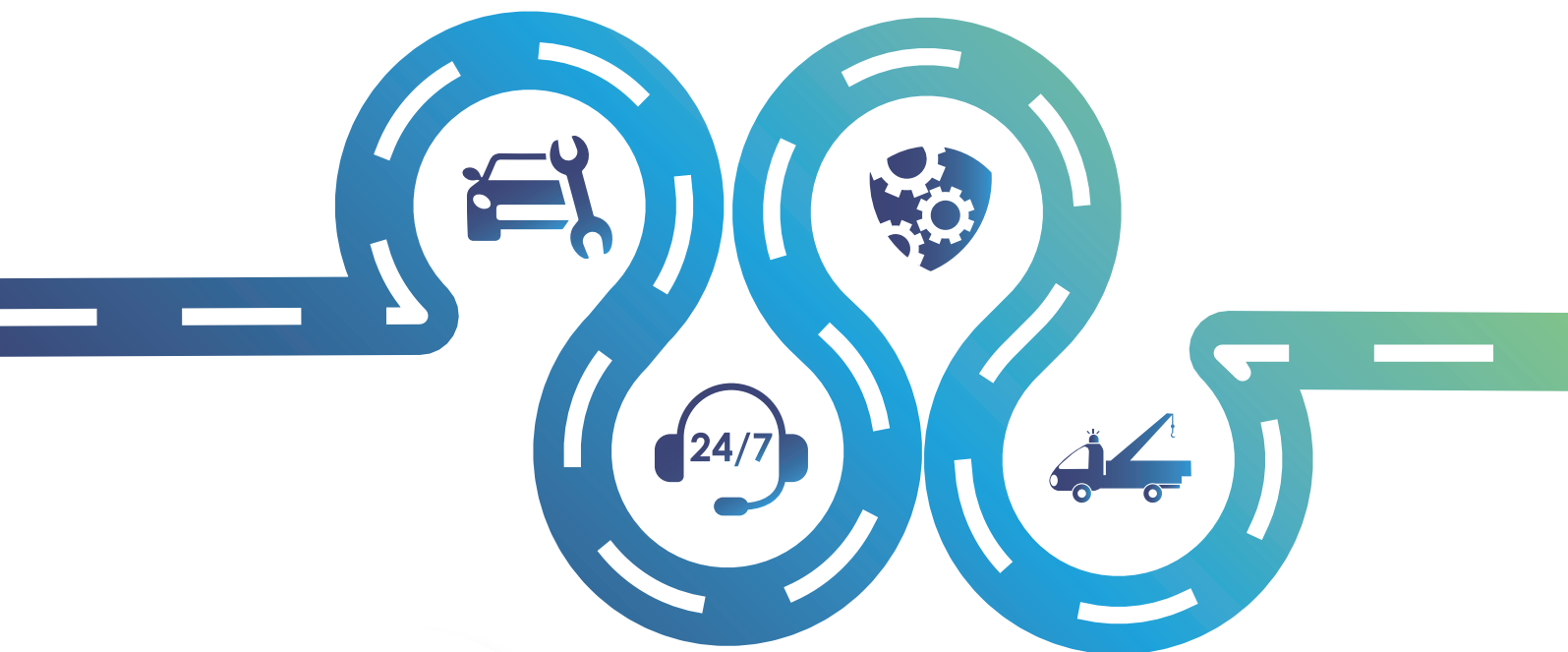
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“And now round two of ‘Justify It’.
We’ll start with you.”

Budget 2025: Industry Comment

Industry experts say the Chancellor’s 2025 Autumn Budget introduces fresh financial pressures for fleet operators at a time of rising operational demands and tightening decarbonisation requirements.

While the long-standing fuel duty freeze was maintained, the announcement of a new 3p-per-mile tax on electric vehicles from 2028 has triggered widespread concern — raising urgent questions about budgeting, replacement cycles and operational resilience.

EV Mileage Tax: A New Cost Burden for High-Mileage Fleets

Under the new system, battery-electric vehicles will be charged 3p per mile and plug-in hybrids 1.5p per mile. The OBR expects the measure to raise £1.1 billion in its first year, replacing revenue previously generated through fuel duty.

For Essential Service fleets, many of which are in the process of electrifying their fleets to meet government mandates, could mean, this increase in operational costs will slow this transition.

Russell Olive, UK Director at charging-management software provider vaylens, said:

“For businesses juggling hundreds of electric vehicles, this could be an additional £40k a year. This extra overhead is a cost many businesses won’t be able to absorb.

“The added financial and administrative burden has not been thought through.

Companies will need new processes to gather the data and comply.

“Not every business is EV-ready yet, and loading additional barriers onto early adopters is a sure way to stall progress.”

There was, however, one important exemption that should ease pressure on LCV fleet operators.

Michael Shaw, CEO of Aegis Energy, said:

“We welcome the news that electric vans will be exempt from the pay-per-mile EV tax. Any additional burden could have discouraged investment in cleaner vehicles at a time when confidence is critical.

“If the Treasury implements the regime transparently and in consultation with fleets, drivers and manufacturers, it will help create a mature EV market built to go the distance.

“The decarbonisation of the UK’s commercial

transport sector is vital. We hope the government continues to focus on policies that support fleet operators through this transition."

The OBR forecasts up to 440,000 fewer EV sales in the five years following the tax's introduction — a shift that could significantly slow national electrification timelines.

Implications for Essential-Service Fleet Planning

The mileage tax lands as operators already face rising insurance premiums, wage costs and tightening budgets. Key impacts include:

- **Shift toward mixed powertrains:** EVs may remain optimal for urban, low-mileage work, while diesel or hybrid vehicles continue in heavy-duty roles.
- **New compliance and reporting requirements:** Mileage recording and tax reconciliation will require new systems — particularly challenging for public-sector operators running legacy IT.
- **Pressure on net-zero commitments:** Many essential-service contracts mandate fleet decarbonisation by 2030–2035. Rising EV costs could force renegotiation or reprioritisation of services.

Fuel Duty Freeze Offers Stability — But No Real Relief

For diesel-reliant fleets, the fuel duty freeze offers short-term certainty. Motoring groups hailed the decision as a major win.

Howard Cox, Founder of FairFuelUK, said:

"Drivers, especially those filling up with diesel, remain among the highest taxed in the world... Cutting this needlessly high tax will deliver increased consumer spending, new jobs, lower inflation and faster GDP growth."

But for essential-service fleets — fire, ambulance, social care, waste management and highways, the freeze merely prevents further cost increases. It does not offset the financial impact of the new EV tax or wider inflation affecting procurement, repair and maintenance.

Cox also warned that the EV charge may be "the thin end of the wedge" toward a broader, nationwide road-pricing system.

Local Authorities Warn of Deepening Funding Gaps

The Local Government Association (LGA) said the Budget fails to address escalating pressures on local services, many of which depend on fleet operations to function.

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Senior Vice Chairman of the LGA, said:

"Local government finances remain under severe pressure, with councils facing huge cost pressures in adult social care, temporary accommodation, SEND and home-to-school transport."

He welcomed moves toward simplified funding but warned current levels remain insufficient to ensure service sustainability or protect frontline operations.

Broader Fiscal Measures Risk Slowing EV Adoption

David Bushnell, Director of Consultancy and Strategy at Fleet Operations, warned that the combined measures could undermine decarbonisation:

"The Budget reaffirms the Treasury's determination to repair public finances, but it offers little meaningful support for the electrification of transport."

"The reduction in writing-down allowances for sub-50g/km vehicles will increase leasing costs. The 3p-per-mile charge for BEVs and 1.5p for PHEVs increases lifetime cost and, by the government's own admission, will lead to around 440,000 fewer EV sales."

"Taken together, these measures will make electrification harder, not easier."

He added that raising the expensive-car supplement threshold from £40,000 to £50,000 offers limited relief, and inconsistent treatment of vehicles based on registration date will unnecessarily penalise some used-car buyers.

Higher Fuel Costs to Drive Up Hire Rates

Gerry McCaig, Chief Operating Officer at Nexus Rental, warned:

"Although the fuel duty freeze is welcome, it is short-lived. From September, duty will rise annually by RPI. Higher fuel costs will inevitably lead to increased hire rates for vehicles and plant across the UK."

"The new EV tax could deter investment in electric and hybrid vehicles, directly impacting net-zero goals."

"In a market already facing operational pressures, this rise and new tax will add further uncertainty for businesses reliant on short-term hire solutions."

He urged industry and government to work together on measures that maintain affordable and efficient hire options.

Industry Calls for Stability, Skills and Infrastructure Investment

Adam Hall, Director of Energy Services at Drax Electric Vehicles, said the pay-per-mile tax risks slowing progress:

"Introducing a pay-per-mile tax now risks slowing progress at a critical stage... Adding new running costs too early could make the decision to go electric feel less certain, just as momentum builds."

He also warned about changes to salary sacrifice rules from 2029, noting that:

"EV salary sacrifice schemes are one of the most effective ways to help drivers access their first EV... Protecting these schemes is essential."

Hall emphasised wider challenges:

- **EV workforce skills shortage:** Nearly 65% of employers struggle to find qualified electricians to install EV charge points, according to City & Guilds.
- **Public charging regulation compliance:** FOI data from Drax shows council compliance with Public Charge Point Regulations has improved to 67%, but further work is needed as new rules come into effect in November 2025.
- **VAT on public charging:** Hall said a VAT reform would have supported businesses and drivers without home charging options.

A Difficult Road Ahead for Essential-Service Fleets

The 2025 Budget highlights a growing tension between fiscal tightening and decarbonisation ambition. Essential-service fleets are being asked to transition to cleaner vehicles while absorbing new costs, meeting expanded compliance requirements and navigating limited additional support.

Operators must now revisit budgets, replacement strategies and long-term fleet planning — while awaiting clearer guidance on how critical public-facing fleets can remain operational, compliant and sustainable during the shift to lower-carbon transport. ●

Managing Compliance Across Lancashire County Council's Diverse Fleet



Specialist vehicles ensuring seasonal resilience



Nicola Rainford
Fleet Compliance Manager
Lancashire County Council

Introduction

Lancashire County Council operates one of the most diverse public sector fleets in the country, supporting vital services across a large and geographically varied area - from remote rural communities to bustling urban centres. With hundreds of vehicles in daily operation, maintaining compliance across this complex landscape is a significant challenge.

Essential Fleet Manager Magazine spoke with Nicola Rainford, Fleet Compliance Manager at Lancashire County Council, about how her team maintains control, consistency, and safety across the fleet and how technology is helping to strengthen compliance standards for the future.

Interview

Q: To begin, could you provide some background on your role, your key responsibilities, and how your position fits within the wider fleet department at Lancashire County Council?

As Compliance Manager within Lancashire County Council's Fleet Services department, my role centres on ensuring that all vehicles are operated safely, legally, and in line with both internal policies and external regulations. I oversee compliance across our diverse fleet, including vehicles operating under our vehicle operator licence and those that fall outside of it, such as our LCVs and passenger-carrying vehicles that operate under Section 19 regulations. My responsibilities include auditing vehicle safety, monitoring driver behaviour, updating policies, and ensuring our operations meet DVSA and other regulatory standards. I work closely with our Fleet Services team and service managers to embed a culture of compliance throughout the organisation.

Q: Could you give us an overview of the Council's fleet, including the number

and types of vehicles operated, as well as the main services they support?

Lancashire County Council operates a varied fleet of over 1400 fleet assets, including 144 HGVs, 170 minibuses and 166 items of heavy plant. These vehicles support a wide range of services including highways maintenance, waste management, adult social care, and school transport. The fleet is spread across the county and serves both urban and rural communities, which adds complexity to our operations and compliance oversight.

Q: A portion of the fleet operates under the requirements of an operator licence. What processes do you have in place to monitor, audit, and review compliance for these vehicles?

For vehicles operating under our goods vehicle operator licence, we have robust systems in place to ensure compliance. This includes scheduled safety inspections, tachograph analysis, driver CPC monitoring, and regular internal audits. We also maintain detailed maintenance records and conduct spot checks to ensure standards are upheld.



HGVs requiring strict adherence to operator licence regulations



Our processes are aligned with DVSA guidance and we continually review them to reflect changes in legislation or operational requirements.

Q: Since the Council's Light Commercial Vehicle (LCV) and car fleet aren't subject to Operator Licence requirements, do you apply the same principles and level of oversight to ensure they are operated safely and in accordance with regulations?

Absolutely. The same principles of safety, accountability, and compliance apply across our entire fleet. We carry out regular vehicle inspections, ensure drivers are properly licensed and trained, and maintain scheduled servicing. Drivers are also encouraged to carry out daily pre-use checks and report any defects promptly. This proactive approach allows us to maintain high standards of safety, reliability, and operational compliance, regardless of regulatory requirements.

Q: Are there specific parts of the fleet that are more challenging to monitor, and what factors make their management more complex? To what extent do you collaborate with other departments to address these issues?

Some of the trickiest vehicles to manage in our fleet are HGVs, Section 19 minibuses and specialist vehicles like gritters. Each comes with its own set of challenges—whether it's safeguarding and permit requirements for minibuses, strict operator licence compliance for HGVs, or the bespoke maintenance needs of specialist vehicles.

Q: Driver compliance is a key aspect of overall fleet safety. How do you

encourage drivers to take ownership of compliance rather than viewing it solely as a fleet management responsibility?

We believe that compliance is a shared responsibility. To foster driver ownership, we provide clear guidance, regular training, and feedback mechanisms. We also involve drivers in policy reviews and encourage them to take pride in operating vehicles safely. By recognising good practice and addressing issues constructively, we've built a culture

where drivers understand the importance of compliance and feel empowered to contribute. Our telematics system also provides real-time alerts and in-cab coaching, supported by a performance dashboard demonstrating driver behaviour scores. These mechanisms increase driver awareness and provide actionable insights for continuous improvement.

...cont'd on page 09 ▾



Minibuses providing transport for adult social care and the community



LCV fleet



...cont'd from page 13 ▲

Q: Lancashire's landscape ranges from the rural uplands of the Forest of Bowland to densely populated town centres. How does this diversity, combined with seasonal weather, affect fleet operations and compliance?

Lancashire's varied terrain presents very different operational challenges. Vehicles on rural or hilly routes face harsher driving conditions and higher wear, while those in urban areas must navigate congestion and frequent stop-start driving — all of which influence maintenance, safety, and compliance requirements.

Seasonal weather, particularly in winter, adds further complexity. We respond by adjusting maintenance schedules, equipping vehicles for the conditions, and providing targeted driver briefings to ensure both staff and vehicles are fully prepared. This proactive planning helps maintain service continuity and operational reliability throughout the year.

The county's geographic spread and decentralised operations also require careful coordination. Strong cross-department collaboration, clear communication, and shared accountability are essential to keeping the fleet safe, compliant, and ready to meet the county's needs.

Q: Technology plays a key role in running a safe and efficient fleet. Are there plans to introduce a new fleet

The 'Book Bus' - providing school library services



management system or telematics platform, and what benefits do you expect it to bring?

We're currently exploring options for upgrading our fleet management system and expanding our use of telematics. Using AI powered reporting and analytics we expect these tools will enhance our ability to monitor vehicle usage, driver behaviour, and maintenance needs in real time. The digital upgrade will improve efficiency, reduce risk, and bolster a stronger culture of accountability and compliance across the council.

Q: Keeping up with fleet compliance requirements can be challenging. What sources or tools do you rely on to stay up to date, and how do you integrate this information into your daily management and oversight processes?

To stay current, I rely on a mix of industry publications, DVSA updates, professional networks and industry events. I also attend relevant training and webinars.

This information is integrated into our policies and shared with fleet colleagues and stakeholder departments through briefings and updates. Staying informed is essential to maintaining a compliant and forward-thinking fleet operation.

Q: What do you see as the main challenges in managing fleet compliance over the next few years, given evolving vehicle technology, legislation, and regulation?

Looking ahead, the transition to electric vehicles, evolving emissions standards, increasing regulatory scrutiny, and workforce skill shortages will all present challenges. Adapting our compliance framework to accommodate new technologies and legislative requirements will be essential. Equally important will be ensuring our staff have the right skills and knowledge to manage these changes effectively, while continuing to uphold the highest standards of safety, reliability, and service delivery. ●

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Stay Ahead of Seasonal and Operational Peaks with Specialist Vehicle Hire

As winter approaches, fleet operators in both the public and private sectors are gearing up for one of the busiest and most challenging times of the year. Harsh weather, higher service demands, and unpredictable conditions can all push fleet capacity to its limits. For many organisations, the ability to quickly access the right specialist vehicles is crucial for maintaining operational continuity and avoiding costly disruptions and vehicle hire remains one of the most effective ways to stay prepared.

Meeting demand when it matters most

Every year, local authorities, utilities, and infrastructure operators face sharp increases in vehicle demands. Gritting routes expand overnight, emergency repair teams must respond to flooding, and access to remote sites becomes challenging without the proper equipment. However, purchasing or permanently leasing these vehicles is often not feasible when their peak use may only last a few months.

That's where flexible hire arrangements really prove their worth. Hire offers access to essential specialist vehicles — from gritters, 4x4s and snow ploughs to welfare units, tippers and utility vans — exactly when and where they're needed. This on-demand service enables operators to adjust their fleets seasonally without tying up capital or ending up with underused

assets once spring arrives.

Resilience through flexibility

Winter resilience is about more than just keeping roads open. It involves ensuring teams can work safely and efficiently in all conditions. For highways departments, this may mean adding more gritters and salt spreaders. Utilities might deploy 4x4 vans to access remote worksites during snow or floods. For construction or rail maintenance, welfare vehicles and mobile workshops help operations continue when fixed-site facilities are unreachable.

Vehicle hire partners are essential in this system, offering not just the vehicles but also maintenance, breakdown assistance, and replacement cover — ensuring operations continue even in challenging conditions. Many hire providers also offer quick response and delivery, allowing public bodies and contractors to deploy additional vehicles within hours.

Smarter, greener fleet deployment

Hire fleets are increasingly helping organisations achieve their sustainability goals. Accessing newer, cleaner, and more efficient vehicles through hire agreements allows operators to reduce emissions during peak times without the financial or operational risks associated with permanently investing in low-utilisation assets. The integration of telematics within hire fleets also provides valuable data on utilisation and driver

behaviour, supporting fleet managers in planning more efficient deployments in future seasons.

A strategic approach to service continuity

The most forward-thinking organisations already incorporate flexible hire into their operational strategies. Instead of reacting to crises, they plan ahead by pre-allocating winter vehicle requirements or maintaining framework agreements that guarantee access to the right vehicles on short notice. For example, public-sector frameworks like Crown Commercial Service (CCS) and The Procurement Partnership Limited (TPPL) allow councils and utilities to source hire vehicles in a compliant, cost-effective way with pre-negotiated rates. By working closely with hire partners, operators can ensure that when the temperature drops or storms arrive, they have the vehicles and resilience ready to deploy.

In summary

Vehicle hire isn't just a temporary solution — it's a strategic driver of year-round resilience. From keeping roads accessible and services running to maintaining critical infrastructure access, the ability to adapt fleet capacity when it is needed most is invaluable. For organisations responsible for delivering essential public services, hire offers the agility, cost-effectiveness, and confidence that modern fleet operations require. ●

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Bob Sweetland, Managing Director

SFS: Driving Fleet Success Through Flexibility and Innovation

Introduction

Specialist Fleet Services (SFS) has experienced a landmark year, expanding its infrastructure, strengthening client partnerships, and offering innovative solutions through its hire division, CTS Hire. Essential Fleet Manager Magazine recently spoke with Managing Director Bob Sweetland about what has driven the company's success and how it supports councils and fleet operators across the UK.



Interview

Q: It seems like it's been a very successful year for SFS. How would you sum up what's happened over the past 12 months?

Thanks, it's been a busy and exciting year. A key development has been the expansion of our workshop network in the South West with the opening of a 7 bay, 3,400 sq ft depot in Wellington, Somerset at the beginning of this year and a new 3000 sq ft facility in Exeter in October. The Wellington depot involved the creation of 10 jobs and we invested over £400k in modernising the site. In Exeter we have invested a further £100k in equipment including vehicle lifts, to carry out heavy and light

vehicle maintenance in-house, meaning quicker turnaround times and less fleet downtime. These depots enable us to provide reliable, localised support where it's most needed.

Q: That sounds like a major investment. What prompted the decision to expand in that region?

The South West has always been of strategic importance to us. As our client base there grows, being closer becomes essential. Having a fully equipped local workshops enables us to respond quickly and efficiently — exactly what councils and fleet operators need. It's about being proactive rather than reactive and ensuring our service is as dependable as possible.



New 7 bay, 3,400 sq ft depot in Wellington, Somerset



Hyndburn Borough Council extend partnership with SFS to 23 yrs, with new contract

Q: Beyond the Exeter workshop, what else has contributed to SFS's strong performance this year?

Several factors. Maintaining long-term client relationships has always been central to our success. For example, we recently renewed our contract with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, who have been a customer for over 20 years. They awarded us a new eight-year contract starting in September 2025, covering around 30 waste collection and street-cleaning vehicles, including those for a new food waste service.

Our partnership with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has also been extended: they've awarded us a new ten-year contract that will take our relationship to 32 years, covering approximately 75 replacement vehicles, including 13 RCVs, with deliveries beginning in June 2027.

Adding to that success, we've recently been awarded our latest contract with Hyndburn Borough Council via the YPO Framework for the provision of nine new Refuse Collection Vehicles, as the council prepares for mandatory food waste collections from March 2026. This is the fifth consecutive contract we've

secured with Hyndburn, extending a partnership that will now span 23 years. Being selected as the best supplier overall based on price and quality really reflects the trust the council places in SFS.

Q: How is SFS supporting councils through regulatory changes such as changes to food waste collections?

Our hire fleet division, CTS Hire, has become increasingly important this year, providing councils and fleet operators with flexible access to vehicles without the need for full purchase commitments. It is particularly valuable for trialling new technologies and collection regimes. The introduction of mandatory domestic food waste collections from March 2026 and the new Simpler Recycling regulations for businesses, is a major challenge for councils. Hiring food waste vehicles, especially during the transitional period, gives fleet operators the chance to trial different technologies and monitor the efficiency of collections. We are continually investing in the latest vehicle technology and in readiness for the new regulations, CTS Hire has invested in a dedicated food waste collection fleet.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, a SFS customer for over 20 years, awards new eight-year contract



Q: Growth and innovation often come with challenges. What have been the toughest parts of this year?

There are always challenges. Supply chain pressures persist, especially for specialist vehicles. As fleets become more technologically advanced, we must ensure our staff are trained and our workshops are equipped for new systems. Training and retaining staff is a major areas of focus for us and we will continue to offer apprenticeship programmes as much as possible. CTS Hire also assists us in managing vehicle demand efficiently, ensuring clients are never left without vehicles.

Q: Looking ahead, what are the company's priorities over the next 12 months?

Our focus is on maximising the potential of our workshop network across the UK as well as continuing to expand our South West service footprint. We also aim to grow CTS Hire, providing councils and fleet operators with even more flexible options for vehicle access. Strengthening client relationships and ensuring our teams are fully trained in the latest technologies remain top priorities.

Q: If you had to sum up this year in one thought, what would it be?

I'd say it's about preparing for the future while delivering in the present. By investing in workshop infrastructure, securing long-term partnerships and new contracts, and supporting with our CTS Hire rental division, we're ensuring SFS isn't just responding to today's challenges but also helping clients meet tomorrow's needs.

I also want to emphasise that none of this would be possible without our dedicated team and loyal clients. We're excited to build on this momentum and continue supporting fleets across the UK for many years to come. ●



DriveElectric Electrifies the London Docklands Light Railway Vehicle Fleet Four Years Ahead of Schedule



Pictured: (L to R) Simon Kidsley, HSQE Learning & Resilience Manager; Izzy Reed, Environment and Sustainability Manager; Neil Stroud, Head of HSQE at KAD

KeolisAmey Docklands (KAD), which operates and maintains the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) network in London, is transitioning its entire car and van fleet to electric with support from DriveElectric, a leading EV leasing specialist, in partnership with Ford.

KAD began a new eight-year contract with Transport for London (TfL) in April 2025, which includes a requirement to fully electrify its fleet within five years. The organisation is significantly ahead of schedule: the entire fleet will be electric by the end of December 2025, with 62% already deployed.

The legacy petrol and diesel fleet—previously essential for demanding operational tasks—has been replaced by 39 electric vans and 6 electric cars. This includes specialist vehicles that have typically been difficult to electrify, such as vans with tail lifts and flatbeds.

All vehicles have been supplied by Ford, including Puma Gen-E cars, E-Tourneo minibuses, and both E-Transit and E-Transit Custom vans. The line-up covers a wide range of operational needs, with



variants featuring double cabs, tail lifts, dropside flatbeds, racking, shelving and ladder racks. Using a single manufacturer has enabled seamless integration of Ford Pro telematics, giving KAD real-time visibility of fleet performance, efficiency and utilisation.

Richard Graham, Managing Director, KeolisAmey Docklands, says: "Delivering a fully electric fleet over four years ahead of schedule is a testament to our team's

commitment and the strength of our partnerships with Ford and DriveElectric. We're proud to champion sustainability, operational excellence and community wellbeing in East London."

The electric fleet is already delivering substantial fuel and maintenance savings, allowing KAD to reinvest in further carbon reduction initiatives. With zero tailpipe emissions, the fleet is also improving air quality for staff and local communities



across East London.

Tom Page, General Manager, Docklands Light Railway Limited (DLRL), adds: *"We're delighted to see KeolisAmey Docklands deliver this ambitious EV fleet transformation. The project demonstrates the impact of close collaboration between DLRL, KAD and our industry partners. By working together, we're driving real progress towards a cleaner, more sustainable future for London's transport network."*

To maintain operational continuity during the transition, DriveElectric supplied short-term electric vehicle rentals. KAD has also explored decentralised clean-energy solutions at two grid-constrained London sites, including the installation of solar-powered chargers and battery storage at the Beckton depot, improving resilience against energy market volatility.

Liam Bone, Regional Fleet Business Manager, Ford of Britain and Ireland, says: *"This project shows the strength of collaboration. By working closely with DriveElectric, we've delivered a fleet solution made up of our freshest-ever line-up that supports KeolisAmey Docklands' transition to zero-emission vehicles, combining Ford's product capability and versatility with DriveElectric's expertise."*

The transition aligns with KAD's Net Zero strategy, delivering a sustainable, future-proof fleet and directly supporting the Mayor of London's Clean Air and Net Zero targets. It sets a new benchmark for sustainable fleet management in the light rail sector.

Adam Kemp, Sales Director at DriveElectric, concludes: *"This was a complex project, and finding the right product to meet demanding operational needs required real expertise. That's where DriveElectric makes the difference. By partnering with Ford, we delivered the right solution and managed every stage of the transition with precision. The outcome is a fleet that keeps critical infrastructure moving, improves visibility through Ford Pro telematics, reduces downtime, and supports the customer's sustainability goals."* ●



With the continuing surge in popularity of Electric Vehicles (EVs) across the UK and beyond, the question around towing with these electric vehicles is becoming more and more relevant. Regardless of how towing fits into your work, the discussion around how well EVs can tow is going to become more and more common.

At Towmate, we've had more and more discussions with customers about EVs and how we can adapt our trailers in order to work with them. The discussions don't only relate to the towing vehicle either, we also have increasing more customers asking around electric diggers as well, and as these are heavier, the weight capacity of the trailer becomes an issue.

The Rise of EVs in Towing

There are now an increasing number of electric vehicle models on the market that can deliver serious towing capabilities. However, towing with an electric vehicle does come with different considerations:

- **Impact on range:** towing reduces the range that an electric vehicle can travel. In addition, trailer weight and aerodynamics can also affect this.
- **Braking system:** electric vehicles use a braking system called regenerative braking which can also be affected by the trailer weight
- **Torque:** EVs deliver torque instantly, which is extremely beneficial for towing but requires a durable trailer that can handle that

power smoothly.

Points of Consideration When Towing with an Electric Vehicle

As with any towing scenario, it is important to make sure you've considered what you need your EV to tow and what payload the trailer needs to have. Here are a few considerations to think about when towing with an EV:

- **Towing capacity:** not all electric vehicles are rated to tow up to 3500kg. Make sure you check with the manufacturer first to make sure your EV can tow what you need
- **Route planning:** route planning with become even more important when towing with an EV, make sure your planning your route with charging stops in mind as towing will reduce the range at which your vehicle can travel.
- **Maintenance:** Make sure that you are consistently checking the tyre pressure and load on your trailer before setting out. EVs are sensitive to rolling resistance so ensuring that your trailer is in top condition will help with efficiency when towing.

Ready to tow electric?

We're committed to innovation, and as EV technology evolves, so will our trailers. If you have questions about pairing your EV with a Towmate trailer, our team is here to help.

Explore our full range of 3500kg trailers and discover how Towmate can help you transition to a cleaner, more efficient future—without compromising on capability. ●

To find out more visit: www.towmatetrailers.com

Autotech Training Survey Reveals Alarming Gaps in UK ADAS Readiness



A new survey by Autotech Training has exposed a stark readiness gap in the UK's independent automotive aftermarket, with two-thirds of garages lacking any vehicle technicians qualified to carry out ADAS calibrations and repair work. More than half of respondents either outsource this work, at a cost of up to £300 per vehicle, or don't offer it at all, while just 17.5% plan to invest in ADAS training over the next 12 months.

Significantly, every single garage that does not currently offer ADAS calibration selected "not applicable" when asked why they don't provide this service. This strongly suggests that customers are unaware of ADAS calibration highlighting a serious gap in public understanding of these essential safety systems.

The findings indicate that many workshops are at risk of falling behind as demand for ADAS services inevitably rises, with profound implications for both road safety and business viability.

ADAS is now standard, but workshop

capability lags behind

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) have rapidly become a standard feature in today's vehicles. In fact, over 90% of cars manufactured in 2018 came equipped with at least one ADAS function, such as lane-keeping or automatic emergency braking. These complex systems must be precisely calibrated after many routine repairs, including windscreen replacements, bumper work, and wheel alignments, to ensure they operate correctly and safely. Yet, Autotech Training's survey found that more than 12% of respondents were unaware that calibration is even required following these common jobs, highlighting a worrying gap in knowledge at the repair level.

The findings also reveal that most independent garages are still underprepared to meet the growing demand for ADAS services. High equipment costs, staff shortages, and a lack of perceived customer demand remain significant barriers, leaving many businesses unable or unwilling to invest in

the tools and training needed to provide this vital work.

Skills gap poses safety and trust risks

The survey mirrors warnings from the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), which recently reported that just 7,572 technicians in the UK are currently qualified to work on ADAS. This represents only 3% of the nation's automotive workforce, alarmingly low when compared to the projected requirement of nearly 97,000 trained technicians by 2032.

This highlights the widening gap between the rapid adoption of advanced vehicle technology and the industry's readiness to support it.

Meanwhile, a growing "trust gap" between drivers and the automotive industry risks undermining public confidence in advanced vehicle technologies. Autotech Training's findings highlight this concern, showing that fewer than half of garages (48%) feel very confident explaining ADAS calibration to customers. As a result, many drivers remain unaware that

these systems must be recalibrated after certain repairs to ensure they function correctly and safely - and that their vehicle insurance may not cover them if their car has not been properly calibrated.

Lost business and slow investment

Nearly 15% of garages reported losing business or experiencing delays because they lacked the capability to perform ADAS calibrations in-house. Despite this clear evidence of missed opportunities, the vast majority of workshops have no immediate plans to invest in either equipment or training, underscoring a worrying lack of urgency.

Respondents pointed to several barriers holding them back. The high cost of specialist equipment was cited most frequently, with many garages struggling to justify the upfront investment. Staff shortages compound the problem, making it difficult to release technicians for training without disrupting day-to-day operations.

Added to this are time constraints and

the perception of low customer demand, which collectively make it challenging for workshops to balance future investment with current operational pressures.

A roadmap to close the gap

To overcome these challenges, respondents highlighted the support they believe would make the greatest impact. Many called for clearer industry guidelines and standards, which would help define best practices and build trust in the services provided. Others stressed the need for greater consumer awareness, so vehicle owners understand why ADAS calibration is essential to their safety and actively request it following repairs.

Workshops also emphasised the importance of affordable access to training and equipment, suggesting that shared resources or subsidised programmes could help level the playing field for independent businesses. There was strong agreement that collaboration between manufacturers, training providers, and the aftermarket will be vital

to ensure independent garages are not left behind as ADAS technology becomes increasingly central to vehicle safety.

"The results of this survey are a wake-up call for the entire automotive industry," comments Alistair McCrindle, Operations Director, Autotech Training. "With so few vehicle technicians ADAS qualified and many customers unaware of the importance of calibration, there is a real risk that vehicles will return to the road with systems that are not functioning as they should, compromising safety for drivers and other road users. At Autotech Training, we are committed to helping close this gap."

"By delivering IMI-accredited ADAS training directly to garages using mobile calibration equipment, we're making it easier for workshops to upskill their teams without disrupting day-to-day operations. The independent aftermarket has a vital role to play, but it needs support, clear standards, and greater awareness to ensure every vehicle on the road is repaired and calibrated to the highest safety standards."



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RIVERSIDE

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Top 5 Mistakes to Avoid in Winter Fleet Planning

Winter brings plenty of challenges, without the added stress of rushing to prepare your fleet. For both businesses and councils, icy conditions, road closures, and unpredictable weather can cause significant disruptions—especially if your winter plan isn't fully in place.

At NRG Riverside, we serve a diverse range of sectors, from local authorities to commercial fleet operators, helping ensure safe and efficient winter operations across the UK. We understand how crucial it is to keep your fleet moving during the colder months. Whether it's reliable gritter hire, flexible support, or practical planning advice, we're here to help you stay prepared and reduce disruptions when winter weather hits.

Here are five common winter planning mistakes we often see, along with some tips to help you stay ahead this season.

1: Leaving Gritter Hire Until the Last Minute

It's easy to put off winter planning when the skies are clear, but as soon as frost is forecast, demand for gritter hire can rise sharply. By then, availability might be limited, and you could find yourself waiting for vehicles to become free just

when you need them most. Acting early puts you in control. It allows you time to evaluate your needs properly, secure the right gritting vehicles, and plan your routes and schedules without the stress of last-minute decisions. It also boosts your team's confidence. Knowing that equipment is prepared, operational, and suitable for the job means they can focus on working safely and efficiently rather than reacting to a problem after it occurs.

2: Underestimating How Much Ground You Need to Cover

Winter maintenance responsibilities often extend far beyond the obvious routes. It's easy to focus on main roads or entrances and overlook areas like staff car parks, side access lanes, or service yards until they pose a problem. If your site has grown or you are working across multiple locations, the need for extra coverage quickly increases. While one gritter might have sufficed in previous years, this may no longer be enough. A simple review of your winter coverage, especially around key access points, can help you make better decisions. If there are gaps, hiring a gritter vehicle provides an easy way to boost capacity without the long-term commitment of fleet ownership.

3: Relying on Ageing Equipment or Infrequently Used Equipment

Older or infrequently used vehicles can

often appear ready to go, only to break down under the strain of regular winter use. Cold weather is harsh on equipment, and even minor faults can quickly lead to major delays in low temperatures. When breakdowns occur mid-route, the consequences can be severe: missed coverage, road safety issues, or even business closures. Ensuring your fleet is winter ready isn't just about having vehicles; it's about knowing they will perform when it matters. If you're unsure about the reliability of certain units, hiring additional road gritters as a backup or replacement can offer that extra reassurance and help prevent downtime.

4: Skipping Winter Specific Driver Training and Briefings

Your team may have years of driving experience, but winter conditions present different challenges, especially when operating gritting vehicles. Skidding, reduced visibility, and unfamiliar vehicle controls can cause mistakes, even for seasoned drivers. A quick seasonal refresher on winter driving techniques, vehicle checks, and safe spreading practices can make a significant difference. It's also a good time to review communication protocols, route priorities, and reporting systems to ensure everyone understands their roles and knows how to respond if plans change unexpectedly.



5: Not Building in Flexibility or Standby Support

Even the best winter plans need to account for the unpredictable. Severe weather events can escalate quickly. The Met Office regularly issues cold weather alerts that impact fleet decisions. If all your available vehicles are already in use, you may not have the capacity to respond.

Relying solely on your existing fleet, without room to adapt, can lead to difficult decisions about which routes to prioritise and which to delay.

That's where having gritter hire options on standby can be a practical safeguard. Whether it's short-term support during a cold snap or standby vehicles ready to deploy, a bit of flexibility can go a long way in keeping things moving smoothly.

Planning Ahead Makes Winter Simpler

Winter always brings a degree of unpredictability, but with proper planning, you can avoid the most common disruptions and keep your operations running smoothly. Access to the right vehicles at the right time is a crucial part of that.

Whether you're covering a single site or managing a larger operation, adopting a proactive approach to gritter vehicle hire — from early booking to building in flexibility — can make all the difference when the weather changes.

At NRG Riverside, we focus on providing reliable, well-maintained gritter vehicles for hire, supported by our extensive fleet expertise. Our experienced team is here to help you secure the equipment you need, backed by maintenance support and national depot coverage if required.



Winter Maintenance Fleet available for Hire

New Acquisition Announcement



NRG Riverside Expands National Depot Network with Acquisition of Truck Care (UK) Limited's Maintenance Operations

NRG Riverside has acquired the maintenance operations of Truck Care (UK) Limited, further strengthening its national depot network with the addition of an established vehicle maintenance facility in Waltham Cross.

The acquisition significantly enhances NRG Riverside's ability to support customers across London and the South East, providing increased local capacity and faster, more responsive service.

Strategically located close to several major customer sites, the Waltham Cross depot will play a vital role in supporting fleet availability and ensuring service continuity as NRG Riverside continues to scale.

"Our recent refinancing has created a strong platform to accelerate our growth plans, and this acquisition marks the first of several strategic investments in our service infrastructure," said Darren Powell, Chief Executive Officer. *"Expanding our footprint and strengthening local capability ensures we remain closely aligned to our customers' needs and well positioned for long-term, sustainable growth."*

Gary Wilson, Chief Operating Officer, added:

"Our specialist fleet business is built on exceptional customer service, and this acquisition allows us to invest where it matters most—reducing fleet downtime

and controlling costs for our customers. We are excited to build on our strong foundations and continue delivering the dependable service that makes us the partner of choice in the specialist fleet sector."

John Matthews, Transformation Director, commented:

"It has been a pleasure working with the TruckCare team throughout this process, and I am particularly pleased to welcome so many new colleagues to NRG Riverside. Our continued growth and established employee development programmes offer strong career opportunities, making this an ideal time to welcome the Waltham Cross team to the business."

The location of the new depot is especially significant given NRG Riverside's long-standing partnership with Reynolds Food Group, a major national operator headquartered in Waltham Cross. The acquisition further strengthens local service capability and reinforces the dependable support underpinning the partnership.

Reynolds Food Group welcomed the news:

"NRG Riverside are a strategic partner, and this acquisition demonstrates both their commitment to our business and their understanding of the need to minimise vehicle downtime. Having service support located here in Waltham Cross will help maintain continuity and responsiveness across our fleet, and we look forward to continuing our partnership as this support develops."

The acquisition forms part of NRG Riverside's ongoing investment in facilities, people and service infrastructure—supporting sustainable growth and delivering long-term value for customers. ●

To learn more about how NRG Riverside can meet your Winter Fleet Planning needs visit: <https://nrgriverside.com>



WHEN THE SNOWING GETS TOUGH! BOOSTING **WINTER RESILIENCE** AT FMG

Every year it feels out of place when we interrupt the long hot days of summer to discuss ice, snow and winter planning, but it's an essential part of our seasonal cycle. Many of the large fleets and utilities companies we partner with have a busy winter season, when vehicle uptime is vitally important, and vehicle off-road must be limited. With nearly 40 winters under our belt and a huge amount of winter accident data to guide us, we know there's no such thing as starting too early.

THE **SNOW** MUST GO ON

Now as we head into winter, the combination of shorter daylight hours, difficult driving conditions and the risk of extreme weather can create spikes in accident volumes. Yet for essential fleets, when the snow and ice come, the show must go on and this is when we reap the rewards of those summer days spent analysing a wealth of winter incident data. The wheels of industry and the UK's utilities simply must keep turning and so we've made 'winter at FMG' as well-oiled as any weather-dependent machine can be.



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SNOW **PROBLEM**

So how does 'winter at FMG' help the fleets we serve? Our team of over 800 colleagues is multi-skilled which means that at times of peak demand, when drivers get caught out by heavy snow and ice, we can boost the support teams in our 24/7 service centre with extra colleagues from across the business.

Some make the most of our hybrid working policy, working so effectively from their own homes that you wouldn't know the difference. Yet when it comes to managing roadside repairs and recoveries, our teams operate from our secure office-based location and, with them in mind, we have our own team of FMG Snow Heroes. These invincible Heroes are specially trained in off-road driving, ready to collect FMG colleagues struggling to get in to work, to ensure they're available at the end of the phone 24/7 to provide all the support your drivers need.

EVERY **VEHICLE TYPE** COVERED

When a driver is stranded at the roadside, whatever the weather, time is of the essence and our support team will stay in touch to monitor their wellbeing and keep them updated on the recovery truck's arrival time. We're proud to work in close and long-standing partnerships with the UK's highest quality vehicle recovery operators who understand and commit to the promises we make to our customers. We have every vehicle type covered, and every complex incident type too, from rural breakdowns to major motorway closures, John O'Groats to Lands' End.

RECOVERY TRUCKS IN ACCIDENT BLACKSPOTS

Driver safety is paramount all year round, but winter poses extra challenges and so we've worked closely with our repairers and recovery agent partners to protect the safety of drivers, whatever vehicle they're driving. We've identified regional blackspots when icy conditions hit, and so we'll proactively position recovery vehicles nearby, to ensure an instant rapid response for any drivers in distress. This also prevents long delays for other road users.

SOLVING PARTS DELAYS

We're also heading into winter 2025/26 with more repairers on our independent network, some new mobile repair and rapid repair options, and some innovative solutions to prevent parts delays from affecting VOR times. Wherever our customers approve, we supply safely salvaged and reusable green parts as an option to overcome industry-wide parts delays, using the highest quality Grade A recycled parts or non-OEM parts. In some cases, where parts delays have stubbornly persisted, the sourcing of green parts has prevented vehicles from being deemed beyond economic repair, allowing a timely repair so the vehicle is back on the road quickly.

WE'RE READY

Over the next three months, we'll manage tens of thousands of incidents, and we're ready. Behind the scenes we'll constantly monitor, assess and control those areas within our power, to ensure we deliver the smoothest experience for fleet managers and drivers, whatever challenges the weather creates.

Jim Dawson

Roadside Repair & Recovery
Management Director





Why Winter Downtime is a Hidden Cost for Commercial Fleets — and Why Simple, Physical Traction Aids Are Now Essential

Downtime is one of the most disruptive and expensive issues commercial fleet operators face — whether you manage a dozen vans, a national fleet of HGVs, or are transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs). Every minute a vehicle is off the road costs time, money, and productivity — especially when it happens unexpectedly.

While fleet technology has helped optimise scheduling, routing, and diagnostics, winter brings a unique set of challenges that no amount of software can overcome. When snow, slush or black ice leaves a vehicle stranded, it doesn't matter how clever your telematics are — without traction, the wheels aren't turning.

And as more commercial operators shift towards EV adoption, the impact of cold weather becomes even more serious — making physical, onboard winter solutions not just useful, but essential.



Winter Downtime Hits Commercial Fleets Hard

For commercial fleets — whether operating LCVs, HGVs or specialist service vehicles — the consequences of winter weather are particularly costly:

- **Missed deliveries** or service appointments leading to breached SLAs.
- **Drivers delayed** or stranded in unsafe conditions.
- **Disruption** to carefully planned logistics schedules
- **Vehicles out of position** for the next day's workload.
- **Extra recovery costs** or need for additional support vehicles.
- **Knock-on impact** across other jobs, routes, or drivers.

Unlike leisure drivers or private motorists, commercial vehicle operators can't afford to "wait it out." Fleets must keep moving — regardless of weather — while protecting driver safety, vehicle integrity, and operational timelines.

But when tyres lose grip, especially in rural or untreated areas, there's often no quick fix. Even short delays caused by snow or ice can cause a ripple effect across multiple jobs or contracts.

EVs Add a New Layer of Risk

The growing use of electric vans and trucks across delivery, service, and municipal fleets brings clear sustainability and cost advantages — but in winter, EVs are particularly vulnerable:

- **Cold weather** can reduce battery performance by 30–40%.
- **Heated cabins** and battery warming systems drain energy faster.
- **A stuck vehicle** spinning wheels burns valuable charge with zero movement.
- **If a battery depletes**, recovery becomes more complex and time-consuming.
- **Additional downtime** is often needed to recharge the vehicle before it's usable again.

For electric fleets, winter isn't just inconvenient — it can completely jeopardise daily operations. That's why preparation must go beyond route planning and include practical, vehicle-based solutions that can help drivers deal with traction issues in the moment.

The Missing Piece: A Practical, Physical Winter Traction Aid

Enter AutoSock's textile-based winter

"Fleet operators invest heavily in planning and technology, but when winter hits, the ability to keep moving often comes down to traction. Our textile traction aid is a simple, proven product that delivers real results when it matters most. For EVs especially, preventing an immobilisation event can save hours — and thousands — in lost time and productivity."

traction aid — a highly practical, low-cost solution designed to give immediate grip on snow or ice.

Simple, compact, and effective, the product fits over the vehicle's driving wheels (front or rear) in three easy steps. If a driver can pull on a sock, they can fit this! There's no need for tools, special training, or mechanical knowledge — just basic common sense and a few minutes of effort.

Once fitted, the product provides instant traction by gripping the snow or ice and removing the thin layer of water between the tyre and the road surface, which is often responsible for a loss of grip in wet slush or freezing conditions. The result? Restored dry friction, safe movement, and control — enough to get the vehicle to treated roads or back to base.

And once clear? The traction aid is just as easy to remove and pack away for next time.

⊕ Designed for Commercial Use – Across All Vehicle Types

AutoSock understands the unique demands of commercial fleets. That's why its traction aids are available in sizes for virtually all vehicle types, including:

- Passenger cars.
- Vans and light commercial vehicles (LCVs).
- Electric vans and trucks.
- Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)
- Fleet vehicles with twin or wide tyres.

With retail pricing starting from just £49.95, it's an affordable way to equip every vehicle in your fleet with essential winter protection — without the cost, weight, or complexity of snow chains.

⊕ A Smarter Standard for Winter Preparedness

Fleet operators can no longer afford to treat physical winter prep as an afterthought. The combination of:

- Rising EV adoption.
- Unpredictable winter weather.
- Pressure to reduce downtime.

...means that simple, reliable traction solutions must become part of standard winter fleet equipment.

AutoSock's product is already in use across commercial and municipal fleets worldwide, helping drivers stay mobile, safe, and on time — even in unpredictable winter conditions.



Conclusion: Prepare Beyond the Dashboard

The fleet sector has embraced digital transformation. But no route planner, battery monitor, or fleet dashboard can move a stuck van or HGV. When the tyres can't grip, the job stops.

That's why fleet readiness in winter must be both digital and physical. A textile-based traction aid from AutoSock offers a low-cost, no-fuss way to equip your vehicles for real-world road conditions — from icy city streets to snow-covered rural roads.

Whether you're operating diesel HGVs or all-electric delivery vans, this winter, don't just plan for disruption — prevent it. Equip your drivers with the means to keep moving. ●

For further information please visit: www.autosock.co.uk

AutoSock
KEEPS YOU MOVING!

National Grid Trials the New Isuzu D-Max EV in Landmark Partnership

Isuzu UK is strategically partnering with National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) to test and refine the forthcoming D-Max EV ahead of its market launch in early 2026.



The New D-Max EV offers the industry-first combination of zero-emission driving with genuine 4x4 off-road, tow, and load capability, making it suited to demanding utility, fleet and commercial applications.

A group of eight engineers from NGED, the UK's largest electricity distribution network operator, will be testing the EV in different operational conditions across its Midlands, South Wales and South West regions.

The trial follows four years of collaboration between the companies, led by NGED's Fleet Technical Specialist, Jane Nicholson.

Jane and her team have met Isuzu's design groups in Japan and Europe, feeding in operational requirements and converter input to integrate storage and equipment solutions tailored for utility fieldwork.

Jane said: "Isuzu has been very keen to have our input from the start and we've provided them with detailed information on the business' requirements.

"This led to us having the opportunity to design and build a D-Max EV alongside specialist vehicle converters Strongs, with our engineers providing input into the features and storage solutions that will make the biggest difference to their work carrying out upgrades and repairs to the electricity network.

"We've always trailed EV vehicles before deploying them into the business but never to the extent we are doing with the Isuzu D-Max EV."

David Cassidy, who is among the engineers testing the EV, said: "Isuzu and Strongs were upfront about what features could be included, and clear about the trade-offs too, like payload versus battery size. The vehicle itself feels impressively like our current diesel models, which makes the transition easier. I'm feeling genuinely excited about trialling the EV in daily work."

NGED has one of the UK's largest and most diverse fleets and is increasingly switching to cleaner fuel sources to run it. It has 1,200 EVs comprising 400 commercial vehicles and 800 cars. The company has a strong record of working with manufacturers and specialists to develop vehicles, having previously partnered with Strongs to convert a passenger car into a light commercial vehicle with all-terrain capability.

NGED Transport Manager Chris Mayell, said: "This partnership with Isuzu is a unique chance to shape not just the vehicle itself but the way it's fitted out for the demands of our fieldwork. Ultimately, we hope it will also be another important step forward in our ambition to have a decarbonised fleet."

Mark Hayes, Fleet Sales Manager at

Isuzu UK, said: "We are very proud to work alongside National Grid Electricity Distribution on this critical development phase of the D-Max EV. Their frontline field-engineering expertise and insights are invaluable to ensuring the vehicle is truly fit-for-purpose for utility fleets.

"The D-Max EV is engineered to deliver uncompromised capability, whether that's towing, loading, off-road access or endurance, while enabling our fleet customers to take a bold step into zero-emission operation. Trials like this make certain we bring to market a vehicle that not only runs clean but also performs without compromise."

The new D-Max EV marries zero-emission electric drivetrain technology with the proven capability of Isuzu's 4x4 pick-up architecture. Key specifications include:

- Dual-motor full-time 4WD system.
- 140 kW total power output and 325 Nm torque.
- 9 kWh lithium-ion battery pack.
- 5 tonne towing capacity.
- 1 tonne payload.
- 210 mm ground clearance.
- 600 mm wading depth.
- 5° approach angle and 24.2° departure angle.●

Winter Driving: A Prepared Fleet is a Safer Fleet

As winter sets in, fleet operators and drivers face tougher conditions like fog, heavy rain, snow, ice, strong winds, and low sun. These increase the risk of accidents, disrupt schedules, and add pressure on teams. Being aware of these hazards and preparing for them is essential.



SEVERE WIND: VEHICLE STABILITY AT RISK

High winds, especially crosswinds, can push vehicles off course, compromising stability. This is particularly dangerous for high-sided vehicles and trailers.

Key hazards:

- Loss of vehicle control, especially at higher speeds.
- Increased risk of overturning for vans and trucks.
- Flying debris on the roads.

Safety tips:

- Reduce speed, especially on exposed routes.
- Keep a firm grip on the steering wheel.
- Be cautious of passing high-sided vehicles or empty trailers that may be unstable.



SNOW AND ICE: REDUCED TRACTION

Snow and ice make roads slippery and unpredictable, especially on untreated surfaces. Black ice is particularly dangerous as it is hard to detect.

Key hazards:

- Skidding and loss of control.
- Difficulty starting or stopping on inclines.
- Reduced tyre traction increases stopping distances.

Safety tips:

- Fit winter tyres where possible or use Snow Socks for increased traction.
- Accelerate and brake gently.
- Increase your following distance significantly.
- Plan routes to avoid untreated minor roads if possible.



HEAVY RAIN: AQUAPLANING AND SKIDDING

Persistent rain can create slippery road surfaces and increase stopping distances. Standing water can also cause Aquaplaning, where tyres lose contact with the road.

Key hazards:

- Loss of control on wet surfaces.
- Extended braking distances.
- Reduced tyre grip causing skidding.

Safety tips:

- Reduce speed and increase spacing between vehicles.
- Ensure tyres are in good condition with adequate tread depth.
- Avoid sudden braking or sharp turns.
- Use headlights for visibility, even during daytime.



FOG: VISIBILITY REDUCED

Fog significantly reduces visibility, sometimes to just a few metres. Drivers may not see vehicles, pedestrians, or hazards in time to react.

Key hazards:

- Reduced reaction times due to poor visibility.
- Difficulty judging the distance and speed of other vehicles.
- Increased risk of multi-vehicle collisions.

Safety tips:

- Reduce speed and maintain a greater following distance.
- Use fog lights, but switch them off when visibility improves.
- Avoid sudden lane changes; stay alert for slower-moving vehicles.



LOW SUN: GLARE AND REDUCED VISIBILITY

Low winter sun can cause glare, impairing visibility and hiding hazards such as pedestrians or road markings.

Key hazards:

- Temporary blindness or delayed reactions.
- Difficulty seeing traffic signals or other vehicles.

Safety tips:

- Use sun visors and polarised sunglasses.
- Increase following distance.
- Keep windscreens clean inside and out, to minimise glare.



PREPARATION IS KEY

For fleets, strong safety protocols, driver training, and well-maintained vehicles help cut risks, protect staff, and keep services running smoothly. A prepared fleet is a safer fleet.

- **Vehicle checks:** Ensure tyres, brakes, lights, and wipers are working properly.
- **Driver briefing:** Remind drivers about winter hazards and safe driving techniques.
- **Route planning:** Monitor weather and traffic; allow extra time for journeys.
- **Emergency readiness:** Carry blankets, high-vis vests, and first-aid kits for delays or incidents.

London Fire Brigade Leads the Way With New Electric Fleet

London Fire Brigade has taken another step in its commitment to reducing its carbon footprint with the rollout of its first fully electric large goods vehicles (LGVs) at its Operational Support Centre (OSC), used to deliver essential equipment across the capital, and a new fleet of Volvo XC40 electric cars used for driver training.

Following successful trials over the past two years at the OSC, the Brigade's Fleet Liaison Equipment and Engineering Team (FLEET) have delivered two 16-tonne electric Renault Trucks lorries to replace the older diesel vehicles that have served London for more than two decades. These new lorries will continue to deliver essential equipment across London and respond to incidents when required, supporting the Brigade's operational readiness in a more efficient and environmentally friendly way.

The new LGVs are equipped with advanced technology that provides real-time data on performance and efficiency. This information will help the Brigade assess how electric vehicles perform in

operational environments and inform future expansion of its zero-emission fleet. Alongside this, eight Volvo XC40 electric cars have been introduced across the Brigade's training centres in Ruislip, Beckton and Croydon, replacing the hybrid and petrol cars previously used. This makes London Fire Brigade the first fire service in the UK to operate a fully electric training fleet. The vehicles will be used by instructors to teach and refresh the blue-light driving skills of senior officers.

The transition to electric vehicles forms a key part of the Brigade's Carbon Net Zero strategy and supports the Mayor of London's target of achieving a zero-carbon city by 2030. Beyond reducing

emissions and improving air quality, the shift to electric power demonstrates the Brigade's leadership in decarbonising the emergency services sector.

The Brigade's further sustainability achievements also include the development of a Zero Emission Pumping Appliance (ZEPA1), which is currently being trialled at Hammersmith Fire Station. In addition, it operates a fully electric car fleet, has cut CO₂ emissions by 59 per cent since 1990, and generates over ten per cent of its energy on-site from renewable sources.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Mark Davidson, said: "London Fire Brigade is proud to lead the way in decarbonising the fire and rescue sector. By investing in electric training cars and LGVs, we are not only meeting our own sustainability commitments but also setting an example for others to follow."

"These innovations are vital in reducing our carbon footprint, improving air quality, and helping London reach its net zero goals."

Carlos Rodrigues, Managing Director for Renault Trucks UK & Ireland, said: "We are proud to support London Fire Brigade on its journey towards a zero-emissions future. The Renault Trucks E-Tech D vehicles demonstrate that electric technology can deliver the performance, reliability and capability required for demanding public service roles. This rollout reflects our shared commitment to reducing emissions and creating a cleaner, more sustainable future for London." ●





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Keep your vehicles moving
safely on snow

AutoSock are reusable socks,
sold in pairs, which are pulled
over the driving wheels
when **extra grip** is needed
on snow and ice

**Instant grip on
snow and ice**

*"A cheap
alternative to
snowchains or
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**Just use them when
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NSAR Upgrades Fleet with Durable Isuzu D-Max for Off-Road Rescue Missions



Northamptonshire Search & Rescue (NSAR) has enhanced its operational capacity with a new Isuzu D-Max DL20, officially named Poppy II. Supplied by Westaway Isuzu, the vehicle was chosen for its proven durability, off-road performance, and ability to operate reliably across the county's diverse rural terrain — from fields and farm tracks to dense woodland.

Built for Demanding Search Operations

NSAR required a vehicle that could combine all-terrain performance with strong payload and towing credentials to support time-critical rescue missions. The Isuzu D-Max, with its 1-tonne payload and 3.5-tonne towing capacity, was identified as the ideal workhorse for the charity's challenging operational demands.

The pickup's shift-on-the-fly 4WD system, rear differential lock, and excellent approach and departure angles ensure maximum traction in unpredictable environments. The latest Rough Terrain Mode, working in tandem with the Traction Control System, intelligently distributes power to the wheels with the greatest grip, reinforcing the D-Max's reputation as one of the most capable off-road pickups on the market.

Equipped for Real-World Rescue Scenarios

To tailor the vehicle for specialist rescue

work, NSAR has fitted Poppy II with a range of enhancements, including:

- Truckman RS canopy
- Under-rail load liner
- Tow bar
- Heavy-duty seat covers & 3D mats
- BF Goodrich all-terrain tyres

Once prepared by Westaway Isuzu, the D-Max received its distinctive Battenburg livery, LED beacons, and dedicated radio communications equipment—ensuring it is fully mission-ready for deployment around the clock.

The charity also benefits from Isuzu's renowned reliability and a comprehensive five-year / 125,000-mile warranty, plus five years of UK and European roadside assistance, offering added peace of mind for an organisation that operates 24/7.

Partnership in Support of Community Safety

Trevor Burfield, Dealer Principal at Westaway Isuzu, said:

"Westaway Isuzu is proud to supply Northamptonshire Search & Rescue with a brand-new Isuzu D-Max DL20 to support their vital work across the community, often assisting in the search for missing vulnerable people. The D-Max offers all the necessary attributes to cover the county's 913 square miles of challenging and diverse terrain."



Northamptonshire Search and Rescue is a registered charity, run entirely by expertly trained volunteers, operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

Neil Balderson, Incident Commander at Northamptonshire Search & Rescue, added:

"Poppy II, replacing our previous off-road pick-up Poppy I, is incredibly capable both on and off road. It has the power to carry all our kit and the efficiency to support the charity's operations sustainably. A huge thank you to Westaway Motors for their support in sourcing the D-Max."

Dean Asplin, Regional Sales Manager at Isuzu UK, commented:

"It's great to see how well the Isuzu D-Max suits Northamptonshire Search & Rescue's needs. After contacting the team to find a suitable replacement vehicle, Westaway Motors worked closely with the charity to get the specification exactly right. Poppy II looks ready to face anything, and we hope it serves NSAR well in their essential work off the beaten path." ●



Alternative Fuels & Overall Winner – Keenan Recycling

IVECO Mission Awards 2025 Winners

The IVECO Mission Awards returned in 2025, celebrating the most capable IVECO vehicles across the UK. For the first time, the awards covered the full IVECO line-up, from 3.5t Daily vans to 44t S-Way tractor units. The ceremony, attended by 150 guests, presented seven trophies recognising excellence across sectors, innovation, and bodybuilder achievements, culminating in the overall Mission Award.

Sector Winners

Construction & Utilities – FCH Construction

Fife-based FCH Construction won this category with its IVECO X-Way Tridem (1+3 AS350x57TPS ON), a 570hp powerhouse built for demanding multi-terrain missions. One of 10 IVECOs in the company fleet, the vehicle impressed judges with its high-spec bodybuild and ability to tackle challenging environments. Additional vehicles are expected by year-end from supplier AM Phillip Trucktech.

Grounds Maintenance & Waste Management – Lewes District Council

Lewes District Council continues to decarbonise operations with three IVECO eDaily (42S14e) refuse collectors. Each

vehicle is equipped with three modular batteries, offering up to 186 miles of range, and powers a Terberg Matec UK Ltd compactor via the ePTO. Safety is prioritised with full guarding and a 360-degree camera system. Supplied by Northern Commercials, these vehicles are built for durability, with an expected eight-year service life.

Alternative Fuels & Overall Winner – Keenan Recycling

Keenan Recycling secured both the Alternative Fuels award and the overall Mission Award with its fleet of 10 IVECO Eurocargo CNG (160E22) trucks. Operating at 16 tonnes GVW with an 11m³ body, the trucks combine strong payload capacity with manoeuvrability at just 2.1m wide. Powered by biomethane derived from collected food waste, the fleet reduces CO₂ emissions by up to 95% compared with diesel. Supplied by AM Phillip Trucktech, the fleet impressed judges with its real-world circular economy model and mission-ready specification.

Delivery & Distribution – Agrii

Agrii was awarded the Delivery & Distribution trophy following the 2025 refresh of its fleet. Five new IVECO eDaily 7.2t curtainsiders joined its 50-strong Daily fleet. With four modular batteries, each eDaily achieves up to 180 miles of range without compromising load space. Trailer solar panels add further efficiency, generating around 500kWh annually — equivalent to more than three full charges. Supplied by South West Truck & Van, the fleet demonstrates real-world



Grounds Maintenance & Waste Management – Lewes District Council

performance of a 7.2t eLCV.

Special Awards

Innovation Award – Astra Vehicle Technologies

The partnership with Astra Vehicle Technologies delivered the IVECO S-Way CNG 6x2, the first biomethane-powered truck able to operate at 44 tonnes and full trailer length using only IVECO components, while retaining full manufacturer warranty. This breakthrough provides operators a viable low-carbon option for heavy-duty, long-haul missions, reducing CO₂ by up to 95% versus diesel.

Bodybuilder of the Year – Torton Bodies

Torton Bodies earned this award for its work on Cheshire West and Chester Council's "Book Bus," a fully bespoke mobile library based on an IVECO eDaily (70C14E). Powered by three modular batteries, the vehicle brings education to rural communities.

Livery of the Year – Cheshire West & Chester Council

Voted by attendees, the Livery of the Year award went to Cheshire West & Chester Council for its playful, cartoon-inspired wrap on the eDaily Book Bus, capturing the vehicle's educational mission and engaging young readers.

Mike Cutts, Business Line Director Full Range UK & ROI at IVECO UK, said:

"Another year brings another fantastic IVECO Mission Awards season — this time recognising our entire LCV and HGV range. Congratulations to all the winners, and a special well done to Keenan Recycling, our overall IVECO Mission Awards Winner 2025." ●



How to Perform a Cost-Benefit Analysis

Managing a fleet in the Essential Services sector means every vehicle, service, and pound spent must deliver real value. A Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) provides fleet managers with clarity to make informed decisions, whether replacing ageing vehicles, adopting new technologies, planning the transition to fully Electric Vehicles (EVs), or employing other fuel options for an existing fleet.

A CBA balances operational performance with financial responsibility, ensuring the fleet continues to deliver vital services efficiently and sustainably. Knowing

exactly where money is going and the impact those costs have on service delivery is crucial. A robust cost analysis enables managers to see not just how much is being spent, but how effectively resources are utilised. It highlights areas where efficiency can be improved, where investment will have the greatest impact, and how to maintain service resilience while controlling costs.

The following simple guide is intended to help fleet managers to think about the steps to take when compiling a CBA.

A Simple Guide to Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) for Fleet Managers Considering transitioning to Electric Vehicles



Step 1: Define the Objective

Start with a clear question, such as 'Should we replace our diesel vans with electric ones?' A specific goal keeps the analysis focused and makes it easier to identify relevant costs and benefits.

Step 2: Identify All Costs

List all costs. Include direct costs involving capital expenditure, such as vehicle purchase or leasing costs, taxation and licencing, implementing charging infrastructure, and indirect costs covering operational activity, such as energy costs, maintenance, and driver training.

Step 3: Identify All Benefits

Include tangible benefits (lower fuel and maintenance costs, higher reliability) and intangible ones (better public image, compliance, driver satisfaction).

Step 4: Calculate the Net Benefit

Net Benefit = Total Benefits - Total Costs.

A positive result means the project adds value.

Step 5: Check the Payback Period

Payback Period = Initial Investment ÷ Annual Net Benefits.

Shorter is better, but long-term benefits may justify a longer payback.

Step 6: Perform Sensitivity Analysis

Fleet costs and benefits can fluctuate (fuel prices, maintenance costs, technology performance). Test different scenarios to understand risks:

- **Best-case** scenario (lower costs, higher benefits).
- **Worst-case** scenario (higher costs, lower benefits).
- **Most likely** scenario.

This helps ensure decisions remain sound under uncertainty.

Step 7: Make a Decision

Use the analysis to guide fleet decisions. A thorough CBA provides:

- A clear picture of financial impact.
- Evidence to justify investments to senior management.
- Insights into which initiatives deliver the greatest value for the fleet.

Summary

A well-structured CBA helps fleet managers understand spending, measure investment impact, and build a business case to adopt lower emission vehicles, invest in new technology or find more cost-effective ways of operating.

Using a CBA allows you to conduct a financial health check on your fleet as it identifies expenses that influence or hinder performance, covering everything from driver wages and vehicle maintenance to fuel, insurance, and compliance costs.

Useful tip: Identifying and Costing Intangible Benefits

Direct costs and capital expenditure are easier to quantify, as are indirect or operating costs. What is more difficult is calculating the costs of intangible benefits.

The table opposite gives a few examples of how you could possibly attribute values.

Intangible Benefit	How to Measure / Proxy	Example of Monetary Value
Improved service reliability	Fewer vehicle breakdowns / less downtime	If downtime costs £500/day and EVs reduce 10 days of downtime/year = £5,000/year
Staff satisfaction & retention	Reduced staff turnover	If replacing a driver costs £3,000 and EVs retain 2 drivers/year = £6,000/year
Reduced environmental impact / compliance	Avoided fines or regulatory penalties	Avoiding a potential £2,000 annual environmental fine = £2,000/year
Enhanced public reputation / trust	Survey-based scoring or community impact measures	If improved public trust leads to £10,000 in additional funding or service grants = £10,000/year
Improved driver safety	Fewer accidents, lower insurance claims	Reduction of 1 minor accident/year costing £1,500 = £1,500/year ●



Hire for Employee Mobility

Reducing grey fleet reliance, improving compliance, cutting travel costs

As today's workforce becomes increasingly dispersed, employee mobility management has become more complex than ever. Hybrid working, multi-site responsibilities, and field-based roles mean employees still need to stay mobile, even when they're not near a central office. Yet many organisations, both public and private, face a growing challenge: how to keep employees moving safely, efficiently, and affordably in an era of supply shortages and evolving work patterns.

Global supply chain disruptions and longer lead times have slowed new fleet deliveries, leaving many organisations waiting months for replacement vehicles.

As a result, employees are often forced to rely on older fleet assets or their own private vehicles. This increased dependence on the grey fleet is not only costly, but also introduces significant compliance and risk management issues.

Vehicle hire offers a smarter, more flexible solution, one that safeguards mobility, enhances compliance, and keeps costs under control during times of uncertainty or transition.

Tackling the True Cost of the Grey Fleet

At first glance, reimbursing employees for using their own cars can appear convenient and low-cost. However, once all factors are considered, it's often far from economical.

Under current HMRC-approved rates, employees can claim 45p per mile for the

first 10,000 business miles. That means an employee driving just 1,000 miles per month costs an organisation around £450 in reimbursements, significantly more than a short-term hire vehicle, which typically includes insurance, servicing, and breakdown cover within the rate.

Beyond direct costs, the grey fleet carries hidden risks: time-consuming administration, inconsistent fuel costs, and potential non-compliance if employees' vehicles are poorly maintained, uninsured, or unsuitable for business use. These issues can expose organisations to financial penalties, legal liabilities, and reputational damage.

Bridging the Gap During Fleet Delivery Delays

With new vehicle supply still under pressure, hire vehicles offer an immediate



and scalable solution. They enable organisations to maintain operational mobility, whether for daily business travel, project-specific needs, or to bridge gaps between orders and deliveries.

Hire partners can provide access to a wide range of vehicles, from cars and electric vans to specialist commercial models, often delivered within days. This ensures continuity of service even when permanent fleet expansion is delayed.

For employees working remotely or from home, who may no longer have access to pool cars or central depots, flexible hire options are even more important. Establishing partnerships with national hire suppliers ensures that vehicles can be sourced locally, wherever the employee is based, keeping the workforce mobile without logistical headaches.

Supporting Compliance and Sustainability Goals

Vehicle hire supports key compliance obligations by ensuring all vehicles are roadworthy, insured for business use, and maintained to manufacturer standards. This significantly reduces risk exposure for both fleet and HR teams while ensuring every journey meets duty-of-care requirements.

Modern hire fleets also support sustainability objectives. Many providers now offer low-emission or fully electric models, helping organisations meet Clean Air Zone or ULEZ regulations and reduce their carbon footprint. In addition, telematics-enabled hire vehicles offer transparent mileage and utilisation data, helping managers optimise routes, control costs, and make data-driven

mobility decisions.

A Smarter, More Cost-Effective Way to Move

Replacing grey-fleet mileage reimbursements with managed vehicle hire delivers measurable cost savings, improved control, and stronger compliance. It allows organisations to pay only for what they use, avoid unnecessary admin, and maintain mobility even amid supply chain delays.

In a world where employees are more dispersed, budgets are tighter, and compliance expectations are rising, flexible vehicle hire offers a proven, strategic way to keep people and operations moving, safely, sustainably, and cost-effectively. ●



**Crown
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Service**

Five Ways Vehicle Hire Solutions Create Value for the Nation

Every day, public sector organisations across the UK rely on vehicles to provide essential services. From healthcare workers visiting patients to maintenance teams responding to emergencies, the right vehicle at the right time makes a tangible difference to people's lives.

Crown Commercial Service's Vehicle Hire Solutions framework offers a structured approach that generates significant value for the nation. Here are 5 ways:

1. Meeting diverse operational needs

Public sector organisations face vastly different transport challenges. A council might need a standard car for business meetings one day and a fleet of gritters the next. Emergency services require specialist vehicles at short notice. Healthcare providers need tailored operational vehicles for community care.

The agreement addresses this through 5 lots: standard cars, 4x4s and vans; light to heavy commercial vehicles; specialist vehicles including emergency and healthcare operational vehicles; and car share solutions.

This range ensures organisations can access exactly what they need, when they need it, without maintaining costly fleets that may sit idle. A council could hire 4x4 vehicles at short notice during severe winter flooding, helping emergency response teams to reach isolated



communities without the expense of maintaining specialist vehicles year-round.

One local council's housing services team is using the vehicle hire agreement to maintain operations while its ageing fleet undergoes renewal. The agreement allows the council to provide uninterrupted service without the capital investment of purchasing replacement vehicles.

2. Flexible solutions that adapt to changing demands

Public sector transport needs are rarely static. The agreement provides flexibility through varied rental durations: hourly car share options for quick journeys, standard short-term rentals, and flexible arrangements exceeding 28 days for longer-term requirements.

Organisations can scale their vehicle access up or down as circumstances change, avoiding the fixed costs of ownership. Car share solutions offer particular flexibility for organisations with multiple staff making short journeys. For example, a local authority could reduce annual transport costs by using hourly car share for short journeys and longer-term hire only when necessary, freeing up budget for frontline services.

3. Contributing to environmental commitments

The agreement supports the government's commitment to reaching net zero by 2050. All suppliers will develop

carbon reduction plans, and organisations will have access to zero and low-emission vehicles.

By hiring rather than purchasing, organisations can access the latest low-emission vehicles without bearing risks associated with evolving technology. Rental vehicles also offer the chance to try electric or hybrid vehicles before making longer-term fleet commitments. All suppliers are signed up to National Highways' Driving for Better Business scheme, promoting safer and more efficient driving practices.

4. Social value beyond the contract

Modern procurement recognises that value extends beyond price. The framework's commitment to social value means suppliers will contribute positively to communities and employment. Framework suppliers could provide apprenticeships in vehicle maintenance and fleet management, creating pathways into skilled employment in communities with high unemployment.

5. More flexibility, better outcomes

The framework provides organisations with a clear route to market, with options to award contracts directly or run mini-competitions. This reduces administrative work while maintaining flexibility.

Smaller organisations can quickly access suitable vehicles without running a lengthy independent tender process. Smart booking practices can further increase value.

Organisations can reduce costs by considering supplier depot locations, as delivery and collection charges can add significantly to total costs. Understanding the full cost picture, including fuel refill charges and out-of-hours fees, helps

Looking ahead

As public services continue to evolve, the ability to access appropriate, sustainable transport efficiently becomes increasingly important. This agreement provides the foundation for better vehicle hire across the public sector, creating value through flexibility, choice, and a commitment to environmental and social responsibility.

By meeting today's operational needs while supporting tomorrow's sustainability goals, it demonstrates how thoughtful procurement can serve both immediate requirements and longer-term national priorities. ●



To learn more visit: www.crowncommercial.gov.uk/agreements/RM6265 or CCS fleet portal

Fleets Urged to Embrace Neurodiversity with 1 in 5 Drivers Affected

New Venson white paper can help fleets unlock driver potential



Neurodivergence affects between 15% and 20% of the population — a proportion that applies equally to people who drive for work. With this in mind, Venson Automotive Solutions is emphasising the need for neuroinclusive practices across fleet operations in its new two-part white paper, “Neurodiversity Behind the Wheel – Driving Change.” The paper explores what neurodiversity is, the challenges neurodivergent drivers may face at work, how fleet professionals can support them, and how vehicles can be optimised to meet their needs.

Venson highlights that embracing neurodiversity enables fleets to get the best from both neurotypical and neurodivergent drivers.

Samantha Roff, Managing Director at Venson Automotive Solutions, said:

“With so many competing priorities, it’s no surprise that neurodiversity hasn’t always been front of mind for fleet professionals. Yet almost a fifth of the population has neurodivergent qualities — a reality businesses cannot ignore. If organisations want to retain employees for longer, reduce accident rates and match drivers with roles where they can excel, they must recognise that one size does not fit all and adapt to the benefits of a neuroinclusive fleet.”

Venson acknowledges that fleet professionals are experts in managing vehicles, not neurodiversity. However, with

the right information and guidance, they can support neurotypes such as Autism, ADHD and Dyslexia, and work with employees to harness neurodivergent strengths. This approach can help develop some of the most efficient, productive and dynamic individuals working in and around fleet vehicles.

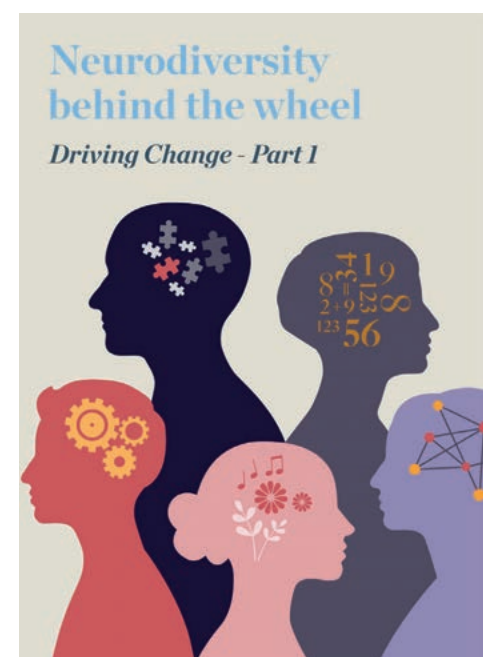
Fleet operators have a responsibility and duty of care to their drivers, and even a basic understanding of how neurodivergent employees may experience their vehicles or time behind the wheel is highly valuable. Venson’s white paper explains how sensory factors — including light and sound — can impact neurodivergent individuals. It also notes that universally specifying vehicles to meet the needs of both neurodivergent and neurotypical employees can deliver cost savings.

But neuroinclusive practice goes beyond vehicle specification. Creating a supportive fleet environment involves adapting communication and management styles to suit a wide range of information-processing needs. By offering guidance on how to adjust communication and leadership approaches, Venson aims to help fleet professionals enable neurodivergent drivers to thrive and play to their strengths.

Samantha Roff concludes:

“Discussing neurodiversity can sometimes

- feel daunting. Many organisations are unsure how to approach it and worry about saying or doing the wrong thing. By providing practical guidance on how to raise awareness and talk about neurodiversity, our white paper aims to break down these barriers. The first part also includes real-world examples of how managers have successfully supported their neurodivergent drivers.” ●



venson

To download the White paper 'Neurodiversity Behind the Wheel – Driving Change' visit: www.venson.com/white-papers/

ALPHABET

How to Take Control of Grey Fleet Risk

Commentary by Caroline Sandall-Mansergh, Consultancy and Channel Development Manager at Alphabet (GB).



As more organisations embrace flexible working and mobility options, the use of employee-owned

vehicles for business journeys, often referred to as the 'grey fleet,' has become increasingly common. While this can seem convenient, it also introduces significant challenges around compliance, safety, and liability. Without proper oversight, businesses may unknowingly expose themselves to risk if employees drive without the correct motor insurance. For example: inappropriately insured, poorly maintained, or unsuitable vehicles on company business.

Effective grey fleet management helps to protect the organisation, but it also helps to ensure that every journey is safe, legal, and accountable. However, grey fleet vehicles often have higher carbon dioxide emissions than a modern fleet vehicle, due to the age and reduced fuel-efficiency of the vehicle. Fleet operators need to be mindful of this when assessing their scope emissions.

For company car drivers, carrying out risk assessments is relatively straightforward – you know who the drivers are, which

vehicles they're using, and how those vehicles are maintained. The situation becomes much more complex when it comes to managing 'grey fleet' drivers. A major issue lies in the assumption that these drivers have the correct insurance cover in place, or that they believe they do, when in fact they often don't.

We've heard from our partners that some drivers purchase the cheapest online insurance available, which in certain cases doesn't even include cover for commuting, let alone business use. This means you can't simply take a driver's word for it – there needs to be a formal process in place to verify that the right level of cover exists.

To address this, Alphabet offers a solution called Driver Risk. Customers can choose to use specific parts of the system or adopt it in full for both company car and grey fleet drivers. It's designed to check essential elements such as risk assessments, driving licences, and insurance documentation. Employees simply log in to the Driver Risk portal, which then issues notifications prompting them to complete any actions relevant to them, such as providing licence details.

"Fleet operators should remember that the obligation to manage risk applies

equally, regardless of how much of their fleet is company-owned versus grey fleet. In fact, the risk is often higher in the grey fleet, since fleet managers have far less visibility and control.

Our guidance for fleet managers to implement a structured process that gives you oversight. In the event of a serious accident, or, in the worst case, a fatality, both you and your organisation will need to demonstrate that employees were aware of the procedures and followed them. Ultimately, it's about being able to show that, as an employer, you've taken every reasonable step to reduce and manage risk.

To cut down on grey fleet use and boost compliance, fleet managers should start by reducing the need for employees to use their own vehicles at all. Often, it's about identifying which journeys are truly necessary and which aren't. When an organisation introduces a clear driving for work policy, employees quickly realise that many intersite trips aren't essential, particularly as the use of video conferencing has increased in recent years. As a result, this can lead to a noticeable reduction in overall business mileage. ●

To learn more visit: www.alphabet.com/



credit: Royal Mail

Royal Mail Accelerates Its Electric Shift with Nationwide Rollout of Micro-EVs

Royal Mail is moving forward with one of its most ambitious steps toward cleaner operations, introducing more than 100 micro electric vehicles (MEVs) to delivery routes across the UK. The rollout supports the organisation's long-term plan to reach net-zero emissions by 2040 and improve delivery efficiency in busy urban environments.

In this first deployment wave, 84 MEVs from Norwegian manufacturer Paxster will be put into service. By replacing 52 traditional vans with 104 compact electric models, Royal Mail aims to simplify movement through congested neighbourhoods while cutting around 242 tonnes of CO₂ each year.

Before committing to the fleet expansion, Royal Mail trialled several types of micro-

EVs to understand how they handled everyday postal tasks. Paxster's model was selected after proving effective across multiple test sites.

Paxster's Managing Director, Aleksander Säfvenbom, said the decision validates the platform's suitability for high-demand postal work, noting features such as plug-and-go charging, tight turning capability, and strong security design.

Royal Mail plans to position the new MEVs alongside its larger electric vans, creating a delivery mix that can better navigate narrow streets, high-density areas, and locations with limited charging access. The micro-EVs are intended to take on the most challenging "stop-start" routes where agility and compact size offer clear advantages.

Säfvenbom commented that many logistics operators face increasing pressure to deliver faster while lowering their environmental impact, and MEVs offer a practical tool to help strike that balance.

With this rollout, Royal Mail is signalling a shift toward more flexible, low-emission delivery models — and reinforcing its commitment to transforming last-mile operations in some of the country's most congested areas. ●

Affinity Water Accelerates Fleet Electrification with 85 Electric Vans

Affinity Water is rapidly transitioning its fleet to electric vehicles, with 85 electric vans now in operation. This shift is part of the company's broader commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship while continuing to provide high-quality water services.

To support the new fleet, over 50 charge points have already been installed at company sites, with more than 100 additional points planned to accommodate future growth. The company expects the number of electric vehicles to increase further in the first half of 2026, with many more on order.

The new electric vans also feature refreshed branding, reflecting their greener operation and Affinity Water's commitment to a sustainable future.

Leroy Thomas (M.I.C.F.M), Fleet Manager at Affinity Water, added:

"I'm proud of the progress our fleet is making. Every electric van on the road means cleaner air and greener journeys for the communities we serve. Seeing these vehicles in action reminds us that small changes in how we move can make a big difference to our environment, and we're excited for even more to join our fleet in the months ahead." ●



credit: Affinity Water



How to Draft a Fleet Vehicle Policy: A Step-by-Step Guide

For any organisation that operates vehicles, whether a handful of company cars or a large commercial fleet, a clear and well-structured fleet vehicle policy is one of the most valuable management tools you can have.

A good policy sets the standards for

how vehicles are used, maintained, and managed. It clarifies responsibilities, ensures legal and safety compliance, helps control running costs, and protects both employees and company assets. Most importantly, it provides consistency, so that everyone in the organisation understands what's expected of them on the road.

Here's a step-by-step guide to help you create a practical, effective fleet vehicle policy.

1: Define Why You Need the Policy

Start by clarifying the purpose of your policy. Are you trying to improve driver safety, reduce operating costs, meet environmental targets, or all three? Setting clear objectives will help shape the tone and priorities of the policy.

You should also define who it applies to. Does it cover only company-owned vehicles, or also leased and employee-owned cars used for work purposes (the "grey fleet")? Setting clear boundaries ensures that the policy is both relevant and enforceable.

2: Decide Who Can Drive and Under What Conditions

Not every employee will automatically qualify to drive a company vehicle. Define

eligibility criteria early on, such as required licence categories, minimum driving experience, or any background checks your organisation may require.

It's also essential to outline how vehicles can be used. For example, are they strictly for business purposes, or is limited personal use allowed? Make sure to spell out any restrictions, such as rules around passengers, towing, or vehicle modifications. Clear parameters help prevent misuse and potential liability issues later.

3: Explain How Vehicles Are Assigned and Managed

Every fleet operates differently, but consistency is key. Explain how vehicles are assigned, whether based on job role, seniority, or operational needs, and how they should be managed day to day.

This section should cover who's

responsible for vehicle checks, cleaning, and routine maintenance, as well as how to report faults, accidents, or damage. Establishing these expectations up front helps avoid confusion and keeps vehicles roadworthy.

4: Make Safety the Cornerstone

Safety is the most important part of any fleet policy. Make sure your document outlines the standards and behaviours expected from every driver.

These may include:

- Obeying all road laws and internal safety rules.
- Mandatory seatbelt use and adherence to speed limits.
- Prohibitions on mobile phone use and smoking while driving.
- Rules around fatigue management, alcohol, and drug use.

You can also link this section to your

organisation's wider health and safety policies, ensuring consistency across the business.

5: Clarify How Costs Are Managed

Vehicles are one of the biggest ongoing expenses for most organisations, so it's important to clearly define how costs will be managed.

Outline how fuel and mileage will be recorded, what counts as a reimbursable expense, and how to correctly use fuel cards or company credit cards. Encourage drivers to adopt fuel-efficient habits and, where possible, include eco-driving guidelines.

A transparent process not only prevents disputes but also supports sustainability and cost-saving goals.

6: Keep on Top of Maintenance

Proactive maintenance keeps your fleet safe and efficient. Your policy should explain how often vehicles are serviced, who arranges appointments, and what drivers need to check on a daily or weekly basis, for example, tyres, lights, and fluids. It's also worth defining how maintenance costs are covered, whether by internal teams, approved workshops, or third-party providers. A clear system helps prevent downtime and costly repairs.

7: Have a Clear Process for Accidents and Incidents

No matter how careful drivers are, incidents will happen. Having a defined procedure in place ensures that everyone knows what to do immediately after an incident has occurred.

Your policy should outline:

- The steps drivers should take to ensure safety and gather information.
- What documentation is needed, such as photos, forms, and witness details.
- Who to contact within the organisation and how insurance claims are handled.

This clarity not only supports compliance but also helps protect your organisation legally and financially.

8: Include Sustainability and Environmental Goals

Many fleets are now shifting toward

lower-emission or fully electric vehicles, and your policy can play a key role in supporting that transition.

Consider including guidelines on:

- Choosing energy-efficient or Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- Reducing unnecessary idling and planning efficient routes.
- Tracking fuel use and emissions as part of your environmental reporting.

Even small changes can contribute to lower operating costs and help the business meet its sustainability targets.

9: Set Out Responsibilities and Consequences

A policy only works if people follow it. Be clear about the responsibilities of both drivers and managers, who enforces the rules, how compliance is monitored, and what happens when rules are broken.

Consequences might include retraining, disciplinary action, or loss of vehicle privileges. While this section doesn't need to be heavy-handed, clarity ensures fairness and consistency across the organisation.

10: Keep the Policy Updated

Finally, a fleet vehicle policy shouldn't be a "write once and forget" document. Regulations, technologies, and business needs evolve, so your policy should too. Review it at least annually, or whenever significant changes occur, such as the introduction of EVs or new safety standards. Gather feedback from drivers and fleet managers, and communicate updates clearly so everyone stays informed.

In Summary...

A well-crafted fleet vehicle policy does far more than set rules, it builds a framework for safer, smarter, and more sustainable vehicle operations. By defining responsibilities, promoting good driving behaviour, and keeping costs under control, it helps protect your people, your assets, and your bottom line.

Whether you're managing five vehicles or five hundred, investing time in developing a clear and practical fleet policy will pay dividends in safety, efficiency, and overall performance.●

Douglas City Council Expands Electric Van Fleet in Move Toward Zero Emissions

Douglas City Council has taken a significant step toward a cleaner, more sustainable fleet with the addition of seven new electric vans, replacing ageing diesel models as part of the Council's fleet renewal programme.

Over the past year, the Fleet Services department trialled a single electric van to evaluate real-world performance — from payload handling and daily mileage to charging practicality. Strong results informed the decision to expand the electric fleet.

Councillor Falk Horning, Chair of the Environmental Services Committee, said:

"Switching to electric vans is a practical, cost-effective strategy for Douglas. It allows us to reduce our carbon footprint while maintaining operational efficiency."

The new vans will support services including waste management, street cleansing, and community transport. They join the Council's existing electric tipper and form part of a long-term plan to transition from diesel to zero-emission alternatives wherever viable.

Councillor Horning added:

"Douglas is ideally suited to electric transport. This expansion shows that EVs can meet the demands of a busy municipal operation without compromising efficiency."

The Council anticipates reduced running and maintenance costs, quieter operation, and improved compliance with emissions standards.

"By integrating EVs into our operations, we're demonstrating how practical, low-emission solutions can support a modern municipal fleet," the Council said.

With these additions, Douglas City Council continues to strengthen its commitment to greener, more efficient operations, setting a clear example of sustainable fleet management.●

Van Guard's ULTIloader Helps North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Reach New Heights in Safety



Devon-based business, Van Guard Accessories, has teamed up with North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team to create an innovative way of transporting rescue stretchers using a compact version of their ladder loader system.

Historically, stretchers have been dismantled and loaded into the rear cab of response vehicles or left assembled on roof racks. This requires volunteers to climb onto the roof of a 2-metre-high vehicle during urgent callouts, adding unnecessary risk at precisely the moments when safety is critical. Like many Mountain Rescue, Lowland Rescue, and emergency response vehicles, the North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team needed a solution that would allow stretchers to be loaded and accessed at a safe working height, and to remove the need to tie down stretchers in the wind and rain. Enter Van Guard's ULTIloader.

Since its launch in April 2024, Van Guard's ULTIloader has become a popular choice for organisations seeking safer roof-loading solutions. Designed to

lower equipment to an accessible working height, the ladder loader enables controlled loading and unloading thanks to its ergonomic design and a unique separation piston within the damper that manages descent speed and prevents sudden movements. Manufactured from high-strength, lightweight aluminium and aerodynamically engineered for minimal wind drag, the system has proven especially popular with fleet operators seeking to improve health and safety while keeping payloads low and fuel efficiency high.

Van Guard has introduced three new ULTIloader variants, available from November 2025: the double CAT, the extra-wide and a 2.3m compact version. It was this shorter 2.3m model, ideal for smaller vans or specialised vehicles with restricted roof space, that caught



the attention of North Dartmoor Search & Rescue.

North Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team's Chairman, James Watts, said, "The ULTIloader has revolutionised how we use our Land Rovers and stretchers. This new solution is easier to use, allowing individuals to unload a stretcher off the roof with one hand. We don't have team members on the roof of the vehicle in cold, wet and windy conditions, often in the dark. To unload or load the stretcher previously required up to three people, but now it can be done safely by one person at ground level in thirty seconds!"

"There's no more climbing up a tiny metal ladder and untying a stretcher from a roof rack and waiting for two or three team



members below to unload the stretcher too.

"The added benefit is the weight on the Land Rovers; we've removed a substantial amount from the roofs, which has lowered the centre of gravity, making the vehicles nicer to drive when travelling around Devon and Dartmoor's narrow tracks.

"We will be adopting the new system across all our vehicles. So, no matter the vehicle, location, or time. We can safely unload, load stretchers and transport with ease and speed."

Speaking on behalf of Van Guard, Managing Director Emlyn Harris responded, *"We know our products make a tangible difference every day, but hearing that the ULTIloader is supporting mountain rescue operations on Dartmoor is something truly special. This is an application we never anticipated, and it's incredibly rewarding to see two Devon-based organisations working together to solve such a meaningful challenge. The ingenuity of the North Dartmoor team's solution shows just how versatile the ULTIloader can be, even in the toughest environments."*

About Van Guard Accessories:

Van Guard Accessories is a leading UK manufacturer of innovative commercial van storage and security solutions. Established in 1976, Van Guard is known for its high-quality, reliable products that improve efficiency and security for commercial fleets.

With a strong focus on customer satisfaction and operational efficiency, Van Guard offers an extensive range of solutions, from roof bars and aftermarket security to storage and ladder systems.

Operating from its headquarters in Devon, Van Guard's commitment to continuous improvement, alongside its comprehensive customer support and account management, makes them the trusted choice for fleet operators across various industries, providing superior products that stand the test of time.

All new ULTIloader variants are available directly from Van Guard and through Van Guard's approved distributor and retailer network. ●

To learn more visit: <https://van-guard.co.uk>

Fleets Need Rapid Clarification says AFP

Fleets need rapid clarification on how to apply the "split-level" Advisory Electric Rates (AERs) put in place by HMRC in September, says the Association of Fleet Professionals (AFP).

Paul Hollick, chair at the industry body, says the move – which provides an AER of 8 pence per mile (ppm) for domestic charging and 14 ppm for highway charging – had left electric company car operators in limbo.

"Alongside many others in the fleet sector, we were initially very welcoming of the change to a split-level rate, something for which we had been long campaigning in recognition of the widely different costs of private and commercial charging.

"However, the implementation has been confusing at best. AERs exist to provide businesses with a useful simplification when it comes to employees reclaiming fuel costs but the new system is almost unusable as it stands."

HMRC's guidance for split-level AER is that for journeys where a company car is charged at both public and residential locations, fleets can apportion the mileage based on how much charging happens at each place.

Paul said: *"How that advice might be implemented is open to wide interpretation and few fleets are confidently proceeding. We require clarification about the methodology and evidencing that is required, especially where it needs to be coded into existing systems. Almost no-one wants to go forward risking they'll adopt the new AER regime incorrectly and face considerable tax back payments and even fines at some point in the future."*

In the absence of detailed instructions, most fleets were playing it safe by using the 8ppm rate, he reported.

"Only in instances where a driver exclusively uses highway charging can the 14ppm rate safely be used. Choosing the lower rate is the conservative option but means drivers who use a lot of commercial charging but some domestic continue to be left out of pocket, which is highly unfair. It's especially difficult for fleet managers to explain to employees

aware of the higher AER why they won't be able to pay them the 14ppm rate.

"We very much believe this is an area where the authorities should be encouraging more drivers and businesses to adopt electric company cars by enabling fair, easy and accurate reimbursement of fuel costs, and this confusion is a definite disincentive."

Lorna McAtear, AFP deputy chair, added that the government's moves were expensive to accommodate from a process point of view, with few fleets able to afford to rewrite their software to apportion rates.

"An idea suggested when the new rates were first announced is probably the best and easiest solution, in our view. If a driver has a home charger, they sign a declaration stating that fact and are treated as an 8ppm claimant. If they don't have a home charger, they sign a similar declaration to that end and claim everything at 14ppm. This is simple to administer and fair in the broadest sense.

"This method also enables fleets to easily add additional amounts to their ppm rate, if they so choose. Both the AERs are arguably too low, especially the higher level when drivers are using highway rapid chargers, and employers could boost the amount they pay easily because the process is so straightforward."

The AFP, alongside other organisations representing the fleet sector, was collecting evidence to show HMRC how further action was required to make split level AERs practical, Paul said.

"We have a good relationship with the tax authorities and they listen to our feedback but their approach is very evidential. They'll want to see proof the situation exists as we describe it before further action is taken and then will need to spend time arriving at a solution that works for them and for fleets.

"Our view is that rapid clarity is needed by fleets but the reality is that arriving at a positive outcome could take some time, which is frustrating."

AER is a ppm reimbursement rate set by the government for employees using a company EV for business travel. These rates are not mandatory, but using them avoids potential tax on benefits for both employer and employee. ●

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

All-New Toyota Hilux

Toyota has unveiled the all-new 2026 Hilux, marking a significant step forward in versatility, sustainability, and fleet readiness. With multiple powertrain options, including a battery-electric vehicle (BEV), a 48 V mild-hybrid diesel, and a future hydrogen fuel-cell model—the Hilux now offers fleet operators unprecedented flexibility to match operational needs with sustainability goals.

Multiple Powertrain Options

The new Hilux embraces Toyota's "multipath" philosophy. Fleet managers can choose from:

Battery-Electric Vehicle (BEV): Featuring a 59.2 kWh lithium-ion battery with permanent all-wheel drive via front and rear e-axes, the BEV retains off-road capability while delivering a WLTP-estimated range of around 150 miles. With a payload of approximately 715 kg and towing capacity around 1,600 kg, it's suitable for urban and regional operations where return-to-base charging is feasible.

48 V Mild-Hybrid Diesel: This combines a 2.8-litre diesel engine with a 48 V motor-generator, delivering excellent payload (up to 1 tonne) and towing capability (3,500 kg). Compact battery placement ensures interior space remains uncompromised, while off-road features

like Multi-Terrain Select and a 700 mm wading depth are maintained.

Hydrogen Fuel-Cell Hilux (Future): Expected around 2028, this zero-emission option provides a long-term pathway for fleets seeking alternative energy solutions.

Fleet-Friendly Design and Durability

The Hilux continues with body-on-frame construction, known for its durability, torsional strength, and reliability—critical for demanding fleet operations. New electric power steering improves handling on rough terrain, while the

Double Cab body style provides flexibility for crew and cargo.

Connectivity and safety have been enhanced with features such as the MyToyota app, allowing fleet managers to monitor vehicle location, charge/fuel levels, and journey data. Advanced driver assistance systems, including Low-Speed Acceleration Suppression, Proactive Driving Assist, Blind Spot Monitoring, and Driver Monitor Cameras, ensure safer, more efficient operations. Over-the-air (OTA) updates also reduce workshop downtime, keeping the fleet operational with minimal disruption.





Key Considerations for Fleet Operators

While the BEV offers a compelling zero-emission solution, fleet operators should note its lower payload (~715 kg) and towing capacity (~1,600 kg) compared to traditional diesel Hilux models. For operations that rely on heavy loads or

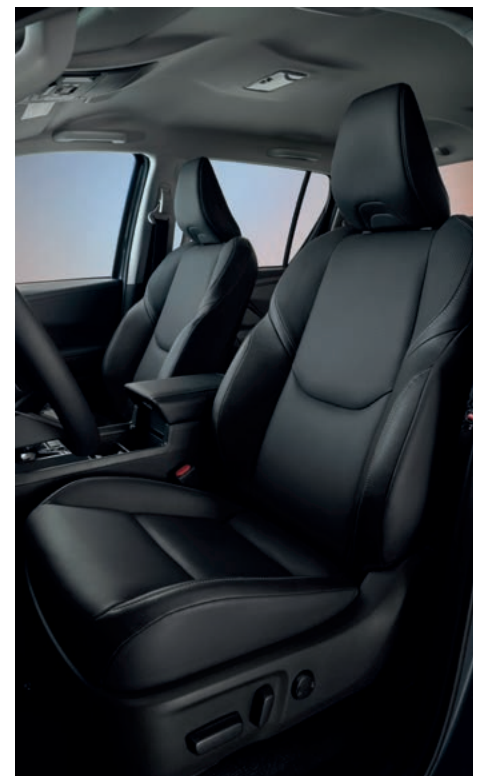
towing, the mild-hybrid diesel may remain the more practical option.

However, the range of powertrains ensures that fleets can transition to cleaner energy gradually, aligning with infrastructure availability and operational requirements.

Conclusion

The all-new Toyota Hilux positions itself as a flexible, durable, and future-ready option for commercial fleets. With

multiple electrified options, improved connectivity, and proven off-road capability, it offers a strong mix of reliability and sustainability—allowing fleet managers to make smarter, greener choices without compromising on performance. ●



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

Nissan Interstar: High Payload Capacity

The Interstar-e is Nissan's first fully electric large van, tailored for organisations looking to operate efficiently in low-emission zones and urban environments.

Available with two battery options to suit different use:

- **40kWh battery** – ideal for shorter, urban routes.
- **87kWh battery** – suitable for longer-distance and regional operations.

Thanks to DC fast charging up to 130kW, the 87kWh model can add up to 157 miles of range in just 30 minutes. For depot-based operations, it also supports 22kW AC charging for faster overnight top-ups. The 40kWh version comes with an 11kW AC onboard charger as standard.

Payload and Practicality Without Compromise

Unlike many electric vans that sacrifice load capacity for battery storage, the Interstar-e has been engineered to retain impressive payload capabilities of up to 1.6 tonnes and a maximum towing capacity of 2.5 tonnes. Chassis cab versions also allow for even more flexibility with payloads up to 1.9 tonnes. With a load volume ranging from 10.8m³ to 14.8m³, and a class-leading 1312mm-wide side door, the Interstar-e is purpose-built for demanding professional use.

Whether carrying heavy loads or complex equipment, it delivers the space, access, and strength today's fleets need.

Built for Conversions and Customisation

The Interstar-e is available in a wide variety of factory-built conversions, including:

- **Tipper** – for easy loading and dumping of materials.
- **Dropside** – offering unrestricted access to the load bed.
- **Box van** – providing maximum enclosed cargo volume.

It's also a perfect base for specialist electric vehicle conversions, with platform weights of 3.5T, 3.8T, and 4.0T available—ideal for businesses needing custom-built mobile workspaces,

refrigeration units, or welfare vehicles.

Driver-Focused, Connected Interior

Inside, the new Interstar-e delivers a significantly upgraded driving experience. The modern, comfortable cabin includes over 135 litres of in-cab storage (version dependent), and is fitted with the latest connectivity including Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Manoeuvrability has also improved, with a reduced turning diameter of up to 1.2 metres compared to the previous generation—making tight city streets easier to navigate, even with a full load.

Advanced Safety and Braking Technologies

The Interstar-e is equipped with cutting-edge driver assistance features, including:

- Forward Emergency Braking.
- Electronic Stability Programme (ESP).
- Lane Keep Assist.
- Traffic Sign Recognition.

A new 1-box braking system not only saves weight but delivers stronger, more consistent braking performance—no matter the payload. Regenerative braking also improves overall electric driving efficiency, helping drivers go further on a

single charge.

This next-generation safety suite earned the Interstar-e a prestigious 'Platinum' rating from Euro NCAP, setting a new benchmark for large electric van safety.

Ready to Support Sustainable Fleet Transition

If you are a fleet operator transitioning to a low-emission fleet, the Nissan Interstar-e with a blend of high payload capability, efficient electric powertrains, with a strong focus on driver safety and comfort.●



To learn more about the **NISSAN** van range, visit: www.nissan.co.uk

Toyota Proace Max: The Heavy-Duty Van Offered with All-Electric Power

Toyota's first-ever heavy-duty van, the Proace Max, offers fleet operators a high-capacity, electric-ready workhorse built for real-world productivity and sustainability.

With the Proace Max joining the Toyota Professional line-up, Toyota now offers a full range of light commercial vehicles for every major fleet segment. The Proace Max is available with both battery electric (BEV) and diesel powertrains, alongside factory-backed conversions and high-spec interior features designed to support a wide variety of commercial operations.

All-Electric Powertrain with Serious Range

The Proace Max BEV delivers robust performance and long-range capability, making it a strong fit for urban logistics, regional deliveries, and sustainability-focused fleet strategies.

- 200kW (268bhp) electric motor with 410Nm of torque.
- Up to 260 miles (WLTP) driving range.
- 110kWh lithium-ion battery.
- Three selectable drive modes for performance or efficiency.
- Regenerative braking system for additional range recovery.
- 80% DC fast charging in just 55 minutes (150kW).
- 11kW AC onboard charger included for depot and overnight charging

With a GVW of 4.25 tonnes, the electric Proace Max qualifies for the UK government's plug-in van grant, helping reduce acquisition costs for fleet buyers.

Proven Diesel Option Still Available

For operators not yet ready to electrify, the Proace Max is also offered with a 2.2-litre diesel engine producing 138bhp (140 DIN hp), paired with a six-speed manual or eight-speed automatic gearbox. With a 3.5-tonne GVW, the diesel variant suits longer-distance operations, rural deliveries, and high-payload applications.

Space to Work: Up to 17m³ of Load Volume

The Proace Max offers one of the largest cargo capacities in the segment, with load volumes from 11.5m³ to 17m³ depending on body length and roof height.

Built for Conversion

Whether your fleet needs tippers, dropsides, or specialist mobile workstations, the Proace Max is available in panel van, chassis cab, and platform cab formats—with factory-built conversion options including:

- One-way tipper.
- Dropside body.
- Extensive accessory range including racking systems, roof platforms, and high-security locks.

All panel van variants come ply-lined as standard, with the option to delete ply-lining to reduce initial costs.

Driver-Focused Standard Equipment

All models launch in the generously equipped Icon trim, with features designed to support safety, comfort, and connectivity:

- 10-inch touchscreen multimedia system with navigation.
- Digital instrument cluster.
- Automatic air conditioning
- Reversing camera and rear parking sensors.
- Auto headlights with high beam assist.

The Toyota Proace Max therefore provides fleets within the Essential Services sector with a high-capacity, electric-capable LCV ready to meet daily demands. With its blend of payload, range, and practical flexibility, the Proace Max is well suited to organisations looking to reduce emissions without compromising capability. ●



To learn more about the **TOYOTA** van range, visit: www.toyota.co.uk



Kia Unveils PV5 Chassis Cab and the “Kia Business Solutions Ecosystem”

Kia has unveiled the PV5 Chassis Cab, its first fully electric dedicated chassis cab model, marking the next significant step in the brand's Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV) strategy. Designed for professional users requiring a highly adaptable, electrified workhorse, the PV5 Chassis Cab combines modularity, efficiency, and purpose-built engineering for Europe's commercial vehicle market.

Built on Kia's PBV-specific E-GMPS (Electric-Global Modular Platform for Service), the PV5 has been engineered from the ground up for electrification and flexible conversion. Despite its compact sub-five-metre footprint, the vehicle offers up to 1,005 kg of payload and up to eight cubic metres of cargo space when equipped with the High Box—figures that rival many larger D-segment vans while maintaining a tight 5.5-metre turning circle suitable for urban environments.

Marc Hedrich, President and CEO of Kia Europe, states: “The PV5 Chassis Cab combines compact efficiency with the



carrying capacity of larger vans to provide customers across Europe with a responsible, flexible solution for daily operations.”

Designed for Maximum Modularity

The PV5 Chassis Cab stands as the most versatile variant within the PV5 range, developed collaboratively with European converters. Supported body types include Dropside beds for construction or agricultural gear, Tippers for municipal

duties, various Box Van configurations for last-mile logistics, and Refrigerated Vans for food and grocery delivery.

“We worked closely with converters, fleet managers, and businesses to make the PV5 Chassis Cab a foundation for all possibilities,” says Sjoerd Knipping, Chief Operating Officer at Kia Europe. “It allows customers to create the utility vehicle they need today while being ready for



tomorrow's demands."

Powertrains and Charging

Kia will provide two battery options:

- 51.5-kWh standard battery at launch
- 71.2-kWh long-range battery arriving in 2026

Range will depend on the conversion type, but Kia's reference figures are based on the L2H1 Cargo model, which achieves up to 297 km (standard battery) and 416 km (long-range) on the WLTP cycle.

The PV5 supports:

- 150 kW DC rapid charging (10–80% in approximately 30 minutes)
- 22 kW AC charging (available later)

This ensures quick turnaround times and minimal downtime—crucial for fleet operations.

Built for Safety and Durability

Kia has equipped the PV5 Chassis Cab with a sturdy dual-annular steel exoskeleton and rear underrun protection, along with an extensive ADAS suite.

Features include:

- Smart Cruise Control (SCC)
- Lane Following Assist 2 with Hands-On Detection

- Lane Keeping Assist
- Intelligent Speed Limit Assist

The model benefits from Kia's seven-year/150,000-km warranty (extendable to 260,000 km), with the battery covered separately for eight years.

The Kia Business Solutions Ecosystem

In addition to the vehicle, Kia has introduced a comprehensive suite of connectivity and charging services designed to simplify electrification for fleets. Developed around the PBV pillars; **DRIVE, CHARGE, CONNECT**, and **WORK**, the ecosystem integrates vehicle management, charging access, data services, and digital tools.

Key features include:

- **DRIVE:** Android-based infotainment with OTA updates and AI Assistant; PLEOS App Market readiness; a fleet-focused rental and replacement programme, Kia Drive for Business, offering daily or flexible monthly options across eight European markets.
- **CHARGE:** Access to more than one million AC, DC, and HPC charging points across Europe; public charging subscriptions via Deftpower's



platform; home and depot charging installations via a partner network.

- **CONNECT:** Kia | PLEOS Fleet platform for administration, reporting, maintenance, and charging management; fleet API and Push API for real-time data, including GPS, charging status, mileage, and diagnostics; Business Mode in the Kia App for managing up to five vehicles directly from a smartphone.
- **WORK:** A central Kia Business Solutions portal for overseeing vehicles, users, data services, and connectivity tools; optional Geotab hardware for non-connected vehicles; further ecosystem expansions planned.●

To learn more visit: www.kia.com/uk/pbv/lineup/pv5-cargo/

Nissan Micra: EV Efficiency, Low BiK, and Reduced maintenance

The All-New Nissan Micra presents itself as a practical, efficient, and cost-effective Electric Vehicle (EV). Ideal for business drivers, it combines low running costs, a useful range, and modern connectivity features within a compact, city-friendly design.

Practical Design & Driver Comfort

Inside, it features a high, upright seating position, offering excellent visibility in city traffic — a key benefit for fleet drivers navigating congested streets. Controls are logically arranged, and the cabin feels modern and user-friendly. While rear legroom is modest, it suffices for occasional passengers or pool-car use, and the 326-litre boot provides ample space for small loads. Fleet drivers will appreciate its compact footprint and agile dimensions, which make parking and manoeuvring in tight urban areas straightforward.

Powertrain & Efficiency

Available with two battery options:

- **40 kWh battery** - up to **198 miles** WLTP
- **52 kWh battery** - up to **260 miles** WLTP

DC fast charging reaches 15–80% in about 30 minutes, while AC charging at 11 kW takes between 3h 40m and 4h 45m depending on the battery size. These ranges and charging features make the Micra highly suitable for city drivers with frequent or multiple short journeys daily.

The electric powertrain delivers smooth acceleration and one-pedal driving via e-Pedal Step reduces fatigue and wear on the braking system, lowering operational costs.

Technology & Fleet Usability

The Micra includes NissanConnect services, enabling drivers to check charging status, pre-condition the cabin, and schedule off-peak charging, which

helps reduce energy costs.

ProPILOT Assist supports adaptive cruise and lane-keeping, improving safety for drivers in busy traffic. Integration with Google Maps and Google Assistant makes navigation and route planning simpler.

Additionally, the vehicle's Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) function allows powering external devices such as laptops or tools, offering benefits for fleet drivers on the go.

Cost & Fleet Considerations

The Micra is financially appealing for the following reasons:

- BiK rate starts at 3%, making it great for salary sacrifice and company car schemes.
- Maintenance costs are lower than ICE equivalents, with fewer moving parts and less brake wear due to regenerative braking.
- Charging costs are predictable and much lower than petrol or diesel, especially for city fleets.
- Its small size, urban manoeuvrability, and modern EV technology make

it ideal for corporate pool cars, or employee company car schemes.

In summary the Micra provides:

- **City-friendly dimensions:** Easy parking and maneuvering.
- **Driver comfort:** Upright seating position, excellent visibility, and intuitive controls.
- **Low running costs:** EV efficiency, low BiK, and reduced maintenance.
- **Fleet-friendly tech:** ProPILOT Assist, NissanConnect, V2L support.
- **Sustainable option:** Zero-emission operation aligns with fleet decarbonisation goals. ●



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



Hyundai Kona Electric: Compact EV with Significant Fleet Potential

As many fleets accelerate their shift to electric vehicles, the Hyundai Kona Electric emerges as a highly practical and cost-effective choice. With its compact SUV footprint, versatile battery options, and fleet-focused features.

Safety and Driver Assistance

Fleet safety is a priority, and the Kona Electric comes equipped with a comprehensive suite of advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS), including:

Forward Collision Avoidance

- Lane Keeping Assist
- Highway Driving Assist

Evasive Steering Support

These systems enhance road safety, support duty-of-care obligations, and can reduce fleet insurance premiums.

Trim Options

The Kona Electric is offered in four trims, allowing fleet managers to match specification to operational requirements:

- **Advance** – Core efficiency and safety features
- **N Line** – Sportier styling with premium features
- **N Line S** – Adds head-up display, BOSE audio, and Alcantara/leather interiors
- **Ultimate** – Top-tier trim with sunroof, surround-view monitor, and upgraded comfort elements



This range enables fleets to deploy vehicles across diverse roles without over-specifying features.

Benefits and Running Costs

The Kona Electric's combination of long-range battery, rapid charging, and driver-friendly technology ensures operational flexibility. Lower energy costs per mile, reduced maintenance requirements, and Hyundai's 5-year vehicle warranty plus 8-year battery warranty contribute to a strong total cost of ownership, particularly for high-mileage operations.

Urban fleets benefit from the Kona Electric's performance in low-emission zones and congested areas, while mixed-use fleets can take advantage of the long-range battery and fast-charging capability without compromising efficiency or driver comfort.

In summary

The Hyundai Kona Electric delivers a balanced package for fleets: compact

yet practical, efficient yet capable, and equipped with the latest technology and safety features fleet drivers expect.

Whether used for urban duties, regional travel, or executive transport, it provides a reliable, low-emission solution that reduces running costs and promotes sustainability.

For fleets taking a confident step into electrification, the Kona Electric stands out as a versatile, cost-effective, and driver-friendly option. ●



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

From HEV to BEV: Kia Niro Delivers a Scalable Path to Fleet Decarbonisation

The Kia Niro has become one of the most important electrified crossovers for UK fleets. Available as a hybrid (HEV), plug-in hybrid (PHEV), or full battery-electric vehicle (EV), it offers a rare level of choice within a single vehicle platform. Its latest generation introduces notable improvements in efficiency, technology, and practicality—three key areas that matter most to fleets managing diverse driver needs and total cost of ownership.

Positioning for Fleet Use

From a fleet perspective, the Niro fits well in the compact crossover segment, competing with the Toyota Corolla Cross, Nissan Qashqai e-POWER, and Hyundai Kona. Its all-electric powertrain range provides organisations an easy way to reduce emissions and improve fuel efficiency without requiring drivers to switch to unfamiliar vehicle types. Kia's seven-year, 100,000-mile warranty

remains a significant benefit for high-mileage fleet drivers, especially those considering a move to electric vehicles but cautious about long-term battery performance.

Design & Practicality

While design isn't usually a top fleet priority, the Niro's sleek, modern styling helps promote a professional image for customer-facing roles. More importantly, the vehicle is practical:

- Boot space of up to 475 litres (EV).
- Generous rear passenger room, making long-distance travel comfortable.
- Ergonomics are well thought out, with a simple cabin layout and good visibility.
- Drivers will appreciate the wide-opening doors and low step-in height

Powertrains: Suitability for Different Fleet Profiles

Hybrid (HEV)

The HEV is ideal for high-mileage drivers who lack regular charging access. The 1.6-litre petrol-electric system provides real-world economy of about 50mpg. It remains quiet in urban settings and smooth at motorway speeds.

Best for:

- Field staff, sales teams, compliance officers.
- Rural routes where infrastructure is inconsistent.

Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV)

The PHEV offers 30–40 miles of EV-only range, enough to cover most daily business mileage if drivers can charge at home or work. With regular charging, it delivers excellent fuel savings and reduces emissions on urban routes.

Key consideration:

Without consistent charging, the PHEV's advantage diminishes, and fuel economy drops compared to the HEV.

Best for:

- Drivers with predictable daily mileage and reliable charging
- Organisations transitioning towards full EV adoption
- Clean-air zone operations

Full Electric (BEV)

The EV is the most sustainability-focused option, offering up to 285 miles WLTP and realistic mixed-range figures around 230–250 miles. It's quiet, refined, and very easy to drive—features that reduce fatigue.

Charging capability is strong:

- 100kW rapid charging: 10–80% in approximately 45 minutes
- 7.2kW home or workplace charging: Full charge in under 10 hours





Best for:

- Urban fleets, local government services.
- Sustainability-focused organisations aiming for net-zero milestones.
- Mixed regional routes where drivers return to base daily.

Driver Safety & Assistance

The Niro's ADAS suite is comprehensive, featuring lane-keep assist, autonomous emergency braking, blind-spot detection, and smart cruise control across the range.

The latest Niro also achieved a five-star Euro NCAP rating, providing reassurance for duty-of-care responsibilities.

Whole-Life Cost & Operational Value

The combination of long warranty coverage, strong energy efficiency, and competitive servicing schedules makes the Niro attractive from a whole-life cost perspective.

HEV and PHEV variants keep fuel costs predictable.

The EV offers notable savings on fuel, tax, and maintenance for fleets with a well-planned charging strategy.

Depreciation on Kia's electrified models has stabilised in recent years due to rising brand perception and EV demand.

For organisations on a structured decarbonisation journey, the Niro provides a scalable solution: drivers can transition from HEV to PHEV to EV without changing vehicle size, brand, or interior ergonomics.

In Summary

The Kia Niro combines the flexibility of three powertrains with low running costs, impressive comfort, and strong driver acceptance. For fleets progressing through phased electrification, with varied driver profiles and daily duties, the Niro offers a practical, future-proof platform.

- **HEV** = high-mileage stability.
- **PHEV** = transition-ready electrification.
- **BEV** = low-emission, low-cost urban and regional mobility.●

For more information visit: www.kia.com/uk

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