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Welcome

Electric and hybrid passenger cars continue to grow in popularity in the UK. The market share for electric vehicles still accounted for just 1.6 per cent in 2019, but the beginning of 2020 has seen a big boost, with electrified cars as a whole making up 11.9 per cent of the total units registered in January.

It's a trend that looks set to continue and, in the commercial vehicle sector, similar moves are being made. Starting at the lower end of the market, there is a full complement of battery-powered vans now on sale and in service with fleets. Many manufacturers are also gearing up to launch more products throughout 2020 and into 2021. We've got a comprehensive run-down of electric light commercial vehicles starting on page 12.

Moving up in size, the likes of Renault Trucks, MAN and DAF Trucks have made progress in electric truck technology and, while there are numerous hurdles still to overcome, the products that have been created are very well suited to urban operations. As an alternative to electric, though, Nikola and Iveco have teamed up to offer a hydrogen-powered option and you can read all about it on pages 21 and 22.

Finally the passenger carrying vehicle (PSV)

sector has also embraced the EV movement, with operators up and down the country now running electric buses – the powertrain and charging network ideally suited to their duty cycle. Find out more in the feature starting on page 18.

But, of course, it's not all about the vehicle – people are hugely important to the transport sector and we have a special focus on health – physical and mental – and a reminder that it is important to make sure both are not neglected. There is also a human element in the analysis of the FORS Satisfaction Survey on pages 32 and 33, which was undertaken last year. It's important that FORS knows it is meeting the needs of its members, so the survey results make for encouraging reading.

Speaking of satisfied customers, the story behind family business – and FORS operator Meadowhall Transport (starting on page 24) is one to savour. Enjoy the issue,

Matthew Eisenegger,
Editor



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VWS takes on Red Forge team

Following the announcement that Red Forge has ceased trading, Vehicle Weighing Solutions Ltd has stepped in to provide employment for the company's staff and is also offering assistance to its customers.

Trevor Evans, Operations Director, VWS said: "We are delighted to welcome these new staff members and to secure their skills and expertise. They are an excellent addition to our team and will help to support our new and existing customer

base, as well as provide reliable and effective service for operators using other equipment providers."

The four new starters include two fully-qualified service engineers, Ian Partridge and Rhys Harrison; Sales Executive, Hannah Brewster and Service Co-ordinator, James Harris. "Any operator or business owner which has existing Red Forge equipment installed or wishes to speak to someone about the situation can contact us and we will be happy to help in any way we can," added Evans.

Irish operator wins safety award

Family-run P.Keenan Road Surfacing has credited FORS after the operator triumphed at the Northern Ireland Road Safety Awards.

P.Keenan won the top safety award for HGVs, which was achieved partly thanks to help from FORS making sure the company boasted 'excellent operational standards' and implemented best practice throughout its business.

In operation for 70 years, P.Keenan Road Surfacing supplies a full range of quarry products and contracting services to the public and private sectors.

Working from quarries in Co. Antrim, Derry, Tyrone &

Fermanagh, the company runs a fleet of 85 vehicles to support its road maintenance operations.

The company achieved FORS Bronze accreditation in 2017, becoming one of the first road contractors in Northern Ireland to prove itself as among the safest of transport operators.

"Working in the industry as we do, it's paramount to keep our employees, our fleet drivers and other road users as safe as



we possibly can," said Brendan Keenan, Transport Manager at P.Keenan.

"It has required significant investment and commitment but it has all been worth it. We can be confident that by following FORS guidelines, we're operating to exemplary standards."

The FORS Bronze criteria were used by the company to act as a catalyst for improvement. As a FORS member, the company has embedded best practice throughout the organisation, delivering tangible safety, environmental and commercial benefits.

"We're pleased the team at P.Keenan are enjoying the benefits of FORS accreditation," said Peter Morrow, FORS Manager for Northern Ireland. "The company's efforts in improving safety on the roads is certainly worthy of this award. Congratulations to all concerned."

Licence check boost

Public Sewer Services (PSS) has praised the FORS Driver Licence Checking Service provided in partnership with Licence Bureau.

Part of the initial reason for the water and drainage solutions supplier outsourcing the licence checking function to Licence Bureau was to support its drive for accreditations and work contract tenders.

The additional benefits are, according to John Moran, Transport and Accreditation Manager at PSS, that the partnership approach has helped alleviate the burden of keeping on top of licence checking in-house. Now, a dashboard provides Moran with all he needs to know relating to the PSS fleet, freeing up his time to focus on more progressive areas of the business.

"We have been very impressed with Licence Bureau's Driver Licence checking provision since we partnered with it in 2017," said Moran. "With over 100 staff and just under 150 vehicles on our fleet, and providing the types of services we do, licence status and entitlement to drive is continuously evolving and requires stringent management."

"With Licence Bureau managing this process behind the scenes – including regular status updates on current team members and any new starters – I can see the exact status of our driver fleet," he added.

Save the date

The FORS Members' Conference 2020 will take place on Tuesday 13 October 2020 at the National Conference Centre in Solihull. This year's event will focus on all things FORS, focusing heavily on the upcoming FORS Standard version 6 update to be introduced in early 2021.

FORS price freeze

There will be no increase to the FORS membership subscription or audit fees during 2020 for the fifth year in succession, it has been confirmed.

The FORS 2019 Annual Review, issued in February, highlights the depth of the benefits now available to FORS members which support the progressive accreditation, including: a new accessible eLearning course focusing on pedestrian safety; discounted fuel prices; funded training places; a mobile version of the fleet management system, FORS FMS and access to FORS Fleet Tools, a free online information system to help members accurately collate and manage fleet-related data.

"Costs remain of huge importance to operators, so it is vital that FORS continues to ensure best value for our diverse membership base," said John Hix, FORS Director. "Our members recognise the value-add FORS brings, with our recent membership satisfaction survey finding two thirds of members questioned stating that their business had received indirect benefits as a result of FORS membership. Holding our fees at the 2015 level highlights our commitment to our members and recognises their continued investment in driving forward best practice with FORS."

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Contract extension for Hankook

Hankook is further expanding its relationship with Schmitz Cargobull and will continue to supply its complete tyre portfolio – from high performance to economical units – adapted for European operating conditions, to the trailer manufacturer. The co-operation, which began in 2013, will be extended by another three years.

“As an industry leader, Schmitz Cargobull has particularly high demands in terms of performance, efficiency and sustainability and we



are proud that our tyres meet these requirements in full,” said Dietmar Olbrich, Vice-President of Marketing and Sales at Hankook Reifen Deutschland.



DVSA reveals that 88.5% of almost 11,000 LCVs stopped at the roadside annually are overloaded

With plans to pull over more LCVs on the roadside and potentially to enforce HGV-like legislation on the LCV market, it's about time you checked your van's laden weights, especially the individual axle weights, as SvTech has discovered many more vans have overloaded rear axles than previously thought. Any overload could invalidate your insurance, and if severe enough, could affect your braking and handling.

SvTech is seeing an increasing amount of van uprates at the moment, especially under 3500kg, where we are uprating from 2800kg to 3000/3200kg and from 3200kg up to 3500kg. This additional 300kg of payload is proving vital for many van owners, as it is very easily to overload these vehicles.

Whilst we uprate 3500kg vans by up to 500kg, there are some issues to take into consideration when going above 3500kg. A van over 3500kg needs a speed limiter fitted and, if carrying goods commercially, the van will need a tachograph to be fitted.

In addition, it means that the van can only be driven by someone who either passed their test before 1997 or by someone with a C1 entitlement on their driving licence.

These factors often make the uprate over 3500kg unviable or impractical for some fleet operators, however if the van is being regularly overloaded, SvTech would recommend uprating. We offer fleet discounts and can advise on the next steps. Please contact us to discuss your fleet needs.

“SvTech can help with uprating your LCV to give you more payload, keeping you safe and legal. Most makes and models are catered for.”

Caution

It's important to remember that if a driver doesn't possess the C1 entitlement, and they overload a 3500kg van, in the event of being stopped, it would also be considered as a licence offence, which can hold strict penalties. It's worth weighing the van in an unladen and fully laden state to ascertain your limits.

Fleet discounts are available for uprates on 5 or more vehicles.

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IDClear INNOVATIVE SAFETY Anti-roll away and driver ID technology launched

A safety innovation to help vehicles from rolling away or being stolen when standing idle during operations has been introduced to the market by ISS.

Certain vehicles – such as those used for refuse operations – need to keep their engines running when stationary, to enable the continued operation of bin-lifting mechanisms and other equipment. Without safety mechanisms in place, these vehicles can be stolen, roll away or be used for alternative purposes.

IDClear incorporates both anti-roll away and driver ID solutions, with the ability to lock the park brake as the driver exits the cab. As a result, the vehicle is immobilised until an authorised driver has been identified using either RFID, a keypad or a covert actuator. A robust safety control unit includes innovative safety features and monitoring systems protect against external influences, internal component failure and sabotage.

The system has been custom-designed in the UK by ISS to ensure that only authorised, identified drivers are able to manoeuvre specified vehicles. ISS' development partner, Amey, along with other waste operators, have taken part in successful trials of the technology.

“We recognise the need to do more to protect the public from the dangers of vehicles either rolling away or being stolen. In response, ISS has designed a product that addresses the problem in a robust, cost-effective way and ultimately saves lives,” says Jason Clement, Supply Chain Manager for Amey Fleet Services. “We are delighted with the finished product and confident it will become an integral piece of vehicle equipment for most fleet operators in the waste sector and other areas.”



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Direct Vision Standard

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, is launching the world's first Direct Vision Standard (DVS) for HGVs. From the 28th October 2020 it will be an offence for any vehicle over 12 tons with no DVS star rating to enter London without the required safety equipment fitted.

The scheme was created to improve the safety of all road users, particularly vulnerable road users like pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

The Direct Vision Standard (DVS) rates HGVs which are over 12 tons from 0 Stars (lowest) to 5 stars (highest). The Direct Vision Standard is based on the measurement of driver's vision through the windows of the HGV cab.

If you drive a HGV you will need a DVS safety permit to enter Greater London from 26/10/2020

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New regulations ahead for coaches

Older coaches employed on home-to-school work are being exempted from the requirements of the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) 2000, which finally came fully into force on 1 January. The temporary exemption will last for two years, but could be extended to four.

Designed to make it easier for people with disabilities, including wheelchair users, to travel, the PSVAR regulations have come into force in stages. The final provisions apply to coaches designed to carry more than 22 passengers and first registered before 2000.

Many of these vehicles are

still not compliant and fully enforcing PSVAR could result in a shortage of coaches available for home-to-school services. Some operators may, of course, opt to scrap these coaches, which are now over 20 years old. Replacements will be available, assuming the customer has the necessary funding in place.

Plaxton aims to build up a stock of wheelchair-accessible Leopard coaches that meet PSVAR requirements and can produce PSVAR-compliant versions of all the models in its range to order, including Panther, Elite, Elitei and Panorama.

"Building our coaches in Britain gives us the flexibility to respond quickly to market



PSVAR regulations are designed to make it easier for people with disabilities

demand and tailor specifications to our customers requirements,"

said Plaxton General Manager, coach sales, Simon Wood.

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Multi-axle tyre options

Tyres are now being developed specifically to meet the needs of electric buses and coaches. Continental has just introduced its first – the Urban HA3 315/60 R22.5 – which it says is suitable for use on all axles. It has been designed to support higher gross vehicle weights – battery packs are heavy – and to cope with the immediate torque delivery characteristic of electric motors. Load bearing capacity is 8.0 tonnes per axle – half a tonne more than is standard for a tyre of this size – thanks to a dense network of thick internal wires.

Diversity win

Stagecoach has been rated the UK's top public transport company for diversity and inclusion, according to an annual survey of corporate reputations. The BMAC – Britain's Most Admired Companies – survey measures the reputation of 250 of the country's largest businesses across 25 industry sectors and has been tracking data since 1990. With some 24,000 employees countrywide, Stagecoach says it has been working hard to build a more gender-diverse workforce, with more women in senior positions and more female



representation in its graduate scheme. "We've taken some big steps forward in the past year, particularly in improving gender balance, but we know we have a lot more to do," said Stagecoach People Director, Clare Burles.

Retrofit plan keeps older diesels clean

York City Council has awarded over £1.6m to five bus companies so they can retrofit older diesel vehicles with the emissions technology required to meet Euro VI. The award coincides with the introduction of a Clean Air Zone (CAZ). Most of the money – £1.188m – is going to First York to upgrade 66 buses.

The CAZ's arrival means that every bus employed on frequent services on or within the city's inner ring road has to meet Euro VI. If it does not, then the operator must have a plan in place to ensure it complies with the standard by the end of January 2021.

"These grant allocations mean that bus emissions will gradually decrease as the year progresses as new and retrofitted buses come into service," said Councillor Andy D'Agorne, the council's executive member for transport.

"This represents a major step forward in our drive to improve air quality in the city centre."

Also making their contribution will be a fleet of 21 zero-emission electric buses soon to be employed by First York on a park-and-ride service. Their introduction is being supported by a £2.2m Low Emission Bus Fund grant from the government.

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Electric vehicle range

Electric van options are growing fast, with many manufacturers bringing electric power to their ranges this year.

John Kendall looks at what's on offer

The Government's stated plan to hasten the end of internal combustion engine (ICE) powered vehicles by banning the sale of new models in 2035 instead of 2040 caught headlines earlier this year. The proposal would mean an end to hybrid electric/ICE power for vehicles too and highlights the short timescale that the Government appears to be working on, relative to the lifecycle of a van model.

The Government's move is likely to set fleet buyers and private customers thinking about trialling the necessary vehicles in good time, so it's important to know what new and soon-to-be-available electric light commercial vehicles are on offer to choose from, as well as the hybrids.

Electrically-powered vans are not new, although take-up for them has remained low, with factors such as cost, range and charging availability often cited as reasons slowing their adoption.

Much has changed in recent years though, with costs reducing, range increasing and greater numbers of charging points available than ever before. Then there are the home and workplace charging grants to help with the cost of installing charging points. The growing popularity of Clean Air Zones such as the London Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) are also making a difference, with van operators taking a closer look at the costs, once

congestion charging zone and parking discounts are factored in along with low fuel prices.

Engineering developments

Ease of driving and reduced noise output are key comfort factors for drivers. Electric vans do not need a gearbox, eliminating the clutch pedal, so driving is similar to an automatic. Without a diesel or petrol engine, noise levels are lower too.

It's worth saying that we are still in the first phase of electric LCVs.

Further ahead, hydrogen fuel-cell models are likely to make an appearance because they will not need heavy and expensive batteries, just a hydrogen supply to generate the electricity.

These are a few years away yet, not least because they will need a hydrogen fuelling infrastructure and currently, fuelling stations are few.



Citroën

Relay Electric

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 141/169 miles on the New European Driving Cycle (NEDC)

Charge options: TBA

Payload: TBA

Load volume: 8, 10, 11.5 or 13cu m

Previewed at the CV Show 2019, Relay is scheduled to appear in spring 2020 in the UK, based on a conversion of the Relay panel van by partner BD Auto. There will be two battery options available with L1 and L2 models offering a range of up to 141 miles (NEDC), while the longer wheelbase L3 and L4 models, which can accommodate larger under-floor battery packs, will offer a range of up to 169 miles (NEDC).

It is not yet clear whether Citroën will import all

lengths of the van to the UK, or whether other body styles will be available.

Dispatch Electric:

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 124/186 miles on the Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP)

Charge options: TBA

Payload: TBA

Load volume: 4.6, 5.3, or 6.1cu m

Along with PSA stablemates the Peugeot Expert and Vauxhall Vivaro, the Dispatch Electric is expected this summer. Citroën has issued few details but, like the Relay, the load area will be unaffected by electrification as batteries will be mounted under the load floor. Citroën has said payload will be similar to diesel-powered models. It is not clear if Citroën will offer all body styles.

The only hybrid van on the market at the moment is the Transit Custom Plug-In Hybrid



Expect a late summer/early autumn 2020 launch for the Ducato Electric

Fiat

Ducato Electric:

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 136/223 miles (NEDC)

Charge options: TBA

Payload: Up to 1,950kg

Load volume: 10 - 17cu m

Expect a late summer/early autumn 2020 launch for the Ducato Electric, which was previewed last summer. Fiat says it will have maximum power of 90kW (121hp) with maximum torque of 280Nm.

Top speed will be limited to 62mph to optimise range. Fiat will offer modular battery size options to provide a maximum operating range between 136 and 223 miles.

All Ducato van body styles will be available, but it is not clear at this stage if there will be chassis-cab variants for conversions such as tippers, dropside models or refrigerated conversions.

Ford

Transit Custom Plug-In Hybrid

Price: From £41,045 (ex-VAT)

Electric range: 35 miles (NEDC zero-emissions)

Charge options: domestic socket or wallbox charger

Payload: Up to 1,130kg (net)

Load volume: 6.0cu m

The only hybrid van on the market at the moment is the Transit Custom Plug-In Hybrid.

This model is equipped with Ford's 1.0-litre Eco-boost petrol engine, to supplement the 35-mile battery range. Ford claims 104.6mpg and 60g/km CO₂ emissions (NEDC). Ford offers a geofencing module which will automatically switch to electric drive when entering a low emissions zone.

Ford says charging takes 4.3 hours from a domestic socket or 2.7 hours from a wallbox charger.

Drivers can choose from four EV modes and select the degree of energy recovery/braking assistance. A single L1H1 variant is offered with van or kombi body. An all-electric Transit is due next year.



LDV E80: rebranding soon

LDV

EV 80

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 120 miles (NEDC, half-load)

Charge options: wallbox charger or rapid charge

Payload: Up to 1,005kg (net)

Load volume: 10.2cu m

The Chinese van manufacturer has just announced that it will re-brand as Maxus from April. This will herald a new electric model, the E Deliver 3, effectively a re-branded EV 30, a smaller model than the EV 80 offering 5.0 or 6.3cu m load volume and 855kg or 1,000kg payload options. NEDC range is quoted as 127 or 121 miles, again depending on model. E Deliver 3 will be on display at the CV Show this year.

LEVC

VN5

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 80 miles (zero-emissions)

Charge options: wallbox charger or rapid charge

Payload: TBA

Load volume: TBA

LEVC's LCV model will be given its global debut at the CV Show in April. It is based on the TX taxi produced by LEVC, using the same plug-in hybrid driveline and is expected to go on sale in the autumn.

LEVC says the van will hold two Europallets, but no further load information is available. More information will be released ahead of its launch at the CV Show.

MAN

e TGE

Price: £TBA

Electric range: 71.5 miles (WLTP)

Charge options: wallbox charger or rapid charge

Payload: Up to 975kg

Load volume: 11.3cu m

The electric version of the MAN TGE shares its basic architecture with the VW Crafter heavy van, but whereas the e-Crafter isn't expected until 2021, the e TGE is due to go on sale in the UK later this year. The van will be available through MAN's truck dealer network.



Mercedes-Benz eVito

Mercedes-Benz

eVito

Price: From £39,895 (ex-VAT)

Electric range: 92 miles (WLTP)

Charge options: Domestic socket, wallbox charger or rapid charge

Payload: 898kg/923kg

Load volume: 6.0/6.6cu m

The Mercedes-Benz eVito has been available to order since January. eVito is available in two lengths, L2 and L3.

The van is eligible for the Office for Low Emissions (OLEV) Grant, reducing the price by 20 per cent up to a maximum of £8,000.

Available in PURE or PROGRESSIVE trim, standard equipment includes a heated driver's seat, air-conditioning, a four-metre charging cable and a CanTrack vehicle tracker as standard. eVito is due to be joined by the larger eSprinter later this year. Charging will take six hours from a wallbox or 20 hours from a standard domestic power point.

Nissan

e-NV200

Price: From £26,250 (ex-VAT)

Electric range: Up to 124 miles (WLTP combined)

Charge options: wallbox charger or rapid charge

Payload: 701kg

Load volume: 4.2cu m

Nissan's e-NV200 is now one of the older electric vans on the market, having been launched in 2014. Since then, the battery has been upgraded to extend the operating range. It is one of the smaller electric vans on the market, but the load area will accommodate two Europallets, typical of other vans of similar size. Available equipment includes a colour reversing camera, Bluetooth connectivity and an integrated navigation system.

The NissanConnect EV app enables vehicle owners to track and log reports from drivers, check battery charge level and also start battery charging and programme the vehicle's climate control system remotely.

Peugeot

Boxer Electric

Electric range: 141/169 miles (NEDC)

Charge options: TBA

Payload: TBA

Load volume: 8, 10, 11.5 or 13cu m

The Boxer is due for launch in spring 2020, with the electric conversion carried out by partner BD Auto. Two battery options will be on offer, with L1 and L2 models providing a range of up to 141 miles (NEDC), while the longer wheelbase L3 and L4 models, with their larger under-floor battery packs, will be able to travel up to 169 miles (NEDC) on a full charge. Further details will be given closer to launch, including which model variants will be offered with electric power.

The Peugeot Boxer Electric is due for launch in spring 2020





Kangoo ZE was the first mass-produced electric van to reach the market

Expert Electric

Price: £TBA
Electric range: 124/186 miles (WLTP)
Charge options: TBA
Payload: TBA
Load volume: 4.6, 5.3, or 6.1cu m
The Peugeot Expert Electric is scheduled to

appear later this year along with its PSA stablemates the Dispatch Electric and Vauxhall Vivaro-e. More information will be provided closer to launch, but like its rivals, underfloor batteries will ensure that the load area is unchanged from conventionally-powered models. Expect a similar payload to the diesel-powered versions. Expert is available in three body lengths, but it isn't clear if electric versions will be offered in all three lengths.

Renault

Renault Kangoo ZE 33

Price: From £24,450 (ex-VAT)
Electric range: 143 miles (WLTP)
Charge options: domestic socket or wallbox
Payload: 672kg – 720kg
Load volume: 3.0, 3.4, 3.6, 4.0, or 4.6cu m

The first mass-produced electric van to reach the market, the Kangoo ZE is one of the smaller electric vans, available as a panel van in standard and Maxi body lengths as well as a five-seat crew van. Originally available only with leased batteries, Renault now also offers the batteries as part of the purchase price too.

Renault Master ZE

Price: From £57,040 (ex-VAT)
Electric range: 75 miles (WLTP)
Charge options: domestic socket or wallbox
Payload: 925kg – 1,078kg (1,350/1,370kg platform cab)
Load volume: 8.0, 9.0, 10.8, or 13.0cu m

Master ZE is offered in three panel van lengths as well as a platform cab, in two lengths, so is available to use with a range of bodywork conversions. Renault says that it can be re-charged fully in six hours, using a 32A/7.4kW wallbox. Top speed is limited to 62mph and the range can be extended using Eco Mode,

which limits performance by slowing acceleration and reducing top speed to 50mph, adequate for many urban operations. Renault offers a number of connected services to help smooth operation and fleet management.

Renault Trucks

Renault Master ZE

Price: From £57,040 (ex-VAT)
Electric range: 75 miles (WLTP)
Charge options: domestic socket or wallbox
Payload: 925kg – 1,078kg (1,350/1,370kg platform cab)
Load volume: 8.0, 9.0, 10.8, or 13.0cu m

Master ZE is also available through Volvo Trucks' subsidiary Renault Trucks, which may suit customers used to the greater flexibility offered by truck dealers. It is offered in four panel van lengths and as a platform cab in two lengths, making it available for bodywork conversions. Renault Trucks says that it can be re-charged fully in six hours, using a 32A/7.4kW wallbox. Top speed is limited to 62mph and the range can be extended using Eco Mode, which limits performance by slowing acceleration and reducing top speed to 50mph, adequate for many urban operations. A reversing camera and reversing sensors are included as standard equipment.

Vauxhall

Vivaro-e

Price: £TBA
Electric range: 125/185 miles (WLTP)
Charge options: TBA
Payload: TBA
Load volume: 4.6, 5.3, or 6.1cu m
Vauxhall is due to launch the Vivaro-e later this year. Like the Peugeot Expert electric and Citroën Dispatch electric, Vivaro-e is based on the PSA EMP2 platform and will be offered with two battery options offering a range of 125 miles or 185 miles. Expect the smaller Combo van to be offered with electric drive next year. Vauxhall plans to offer electric versions of all models by 2024.

More to come

Other future electric LCVs to note could include something from Iveco, which has sold electric versions of the Daily in the past. While there is no current electric model, one is expected soon. Meanwhile, Volkswagen is planning to bring the electric Transporter T6 to the UK later this year, while the all-electric e-Crafter is likely to appear in 2021.



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Clean and green cities

A growing number of zero-emission electric buses are appearing on city streets countrywide, as urban authorities battle to improve air quality

Reducing vehicle emissions is a nationwide effort but, in many ways, London is leading the way with clean public transportation. All buses entering the Ultra Low Emission Zone introduced last year must be electric, hybrid or powered by hydrogen fuel-cells – and those operating elsewhere in the capital will have to comply with Euro VI standards as a minimum by October.

Diesel buses that do not meet Euro VI are having to be upgraded with retrofit emission systems at a cost of £14,000 to £18,000 apiece.

The cost is being met by Transport for London (TfL) in an £86.1m initiative.

Electric buses now hitting the capital's streets include 11 BYD ADL Enviro200EVs now in operation with Go-Ahead London. All are 9.6m 24-seaters with an overall capacity of 66 passengers, boasting a range of 150 miles between recharges, according to BYD ADL.

BELOW: Electric buses now hitting the capital's streets include 11 BYD ADL Enviro200EVs now in operation with Go-Ahead London



First Glasgow is starting the ball rolling by putting a pair of BYD ADL Enviro 200EV 10.8m single-deckers into service

Electric charge

This debut means that the Go-Ahead London fleet now boasts 100 Enviro200EVs, with another 13 scheduled to arrive shortly. "We're leading the way so far as zero emission travel for our customers is concerned," says Go-Ahead London Engineering Director, Richard Harrington.

The vehicles use a platform built by Chinese manufacturer BYD, which has a factory in Hungary, but a body constructed by British bus builder ADL. Other battery-powered single-deckers about to appear in London include 34 10.7m Caetano e.City Golds soon to be deployed by Abellio.

Electric vehicles do not come cheap. Nor does the infrastructure required to support them and the funding has to come from somewhere. SP Energy Networks – the distribution arm of ScottishPower – has set up a £20m Green Economy Fund to support Glasgow's mission to become the UK's first net zero emissions city by 2030. The fund is underpinning the introduction of electric buses in Scotland's biggest city to the tune of £1.5m.

First Glasgow is starting the ball rolling by putting a pair of BYD ADL Enviro 200EV 10.8m single-deckers into service. They are charged up overnight at the operator's Caledonia depot, where 22 charging points are being installed in anticipation of more electric buses joining the fleet.

"Every customer journey on the Enviro 200EVs' route are on will save around 2kg of CO2 compared

with driving on your own in an average car," says First Glasgow Managing Director, Andrew Jarvis. They are not the only Enviro 200EVs to go into service in the Glasgow area. Three 10.8m models can now be seen at the city's airport, transporting passengers between the terminal and the long-stay car park.

Operated by NCP, they are fitted with three-tier luggage racking. Their introduction has been supported by funding from Transport Scotland.

Northern power(house)

Elsewhere, First Bus is partnering with Chinese manufacturer Yutong, its UK distributor Pelican Bus & Coach and Zenobe Energy to roll out nine electric buses in Leeds. All E10 10.8m single-deckers, the Yutongs are to be based at First's Hunslet Park depot. Go North East is taking nine E10s too.

Zenobe Energy has developed a package that includes the charging points and a bank of batteries to store the energy they need, which helps to overcome any constraints imposed by the local grid. Included too are the vehicles and any replacement

“We guarantee that the bus will be charged, pre-heated, and ready to leave the depot first thing every morning”

battery packs that may be required.

“We translate all this into a pence-per-mile charge or a fixed monthly fee,” says Steven Meersman, a Co-Founder of Zenobe. “Then we guarantee that the bus will be charged, pre-heated, and ready to leave the depot first thing every morning.”

TfL has been busy overseeing the introduction of electric double-deckers in London in conjunction with operator Metroline. Thirty-one of them are Metrodecker EVs from Optare while 37 are BYD ADL Enviro400EVs.

Compressed natural gas and biogas still have a role to play when it comes to cutting bus emissions. Nottingham City Transport runs 120 double-deckers on biogas using Scania platforms, the biggest fleet of its type in the world.

The Enviro400CBG City buses have a range of 250 miles and are bodied by ADL. The gas that powers them comes from the anaerobic digestion of sewage and food and farm waste.

Hope for hydrogen

As indicated earlier, TfL is busy exploring the advantages of buses capable of running on hydrogen fuel-cells, which emit nothing more toxic than water vapour – and interest in fuel-cells is not confined to London. Buses using the technology



ABOVE RIGHT: Nottingham City Transport runs 120 double-deckers on biogas

BELOW: the Metrodecker EV from Optare



have undergone an extended trial in Aberdeen, while in 2019 Liverpool City Region launched a £6.4m hydrogen bus project following a successful bid for funding from the government's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV).

Last year also saw TfL order 20 hydrogen fuel-cell double-deckers from Wrightbus prior to the company's collapse, again supported by funding from OLEV.

Founded and chaired by Jo Bamford, son of JCB Chairman Lord Bamford, Ryse Hydrogen was involved in the project. It specialises in hydrogen production and refuelling systems, which helps explain why Bamford set up Bamford Bus Company to purchase Wrightbus from its administrators in late 2019.

The acquisition should help ensure that hydrogen fuel-cell buses continue to be developed by the revived Northern Ireland business. Bamford would like to see Westminster support the technology more generously than it does at present.

“The government should commit £250m a year to a hydrogen bus fund,” he argues. “This will eliminate the £150,000 difference in cost between existing diesel and hydrogen fuel cell buses.”

“While there have been great strides in developing electric vehicle technology, we risk overlooking hydrogen as a practical here-and-now solution,” Bamford adds.

A lot of energy is needed to make hydrogen and the environmental credentials of both hydrogen fuel-cell and electric buses will undoubtedly suffer if the power they need comes from fossil fuels.

Energy in the UK is increasingly coming from zero-carbon sources, however, with wind, solar, nuclear and hydro accounting for 48.5 per cent of power generation in 2019 and biomass and waste making up 8.5 per cent of the overall mix according to the National Grid. Fossil fuels were in the minority, at just 43 per cent, the first time this has happened since the industrial revolution.

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The hard cell

Nikola and Iveco have joined forces and are hyping up hydrogen. **Steve Banner** investigates

A fuel-cell and hydrogen represent the only way to transport and store an abundance of energy

Nikola, together with Iveco, has developed a tractor unit powered by a hydrogen fuel-cell with a claimed range of up to 500 miles



Instead of diesel, truck drivers will soon be refuelling their vehicles with hydrogen. That's the message from Nikola, which has – together with Iveco – developed a tractor unit powered by a hydrogen fuel-cell with a claimed range of up to 500 miles. Set to appear on UK and European markets in the near future, the TRE is based around Iveco's S-Way – the 4x2 unit being good for 400hp.

High-pressure carbon fibre tanks sit between the truck's chassis rails and can hold from 40kg to 80kg of hydrogen. Claimed refuelling time from empty is around a quarter of an hour. TRE will go on trial next year with a launch inked in for 2022.

"I don't care what other truck manufacturers say, we're the ones who are paving the way," says Nikola Chief Executive Officer, Trevor Milton. "The world is changing and hydrogen is truly the fuel of the future."

Nikola designs and manufactures hydrogen electric vehicles, electric vehicle drivetrains, vehicle components, energy storage systems and hydrogen stations. It intends to set up a network of 70 hydrogen production and refuelling sites along key transport routes around Europe. However the first ones are not scheduled to open in the UK until 2026.

The electricity will have to be produced from environmentally-friendly sources such as wind, solar and tidal to make the project credible, not from fossil fuels such as coal.

Despite Milton's enthusiasm, Nikola is not staking everything on hydrogen fuel-cells. Later this year a battery-electric version of the same truck will go on trial with a claimed range of 250 miles

and 640hp on tap. Roughly 900kg heavier than the equivalent diesel S-Way, both trucks employ the same drive-axle-mounted electric motor. The fuel-cell model will be equipped with one of the aforementioned battery packs.

The 4x2 tractors will be the first to appear on the

highway, followed by 6x2 and possibly 6x4 units. TRE will also be marketed as a two- and three-axle rigid grossing at 18 and 26 tonnes respectively. Italdesign has been involved in integrating what Nikola has to offer into the S-Way, with the work carried out at its headquarters in Italy. The trucks will be built at Iveco's factory in Ulm, Germany, where a 40 million euro investment is being made.

Under a 50/50 joint-venture agreement, Iveco will market the newcomers through its dealer network, but they will retain the Nikola badge.

The battery-electric TRE will make its exhibition debut at the IAA Commercial Vehicle Show in Hanover, Germany in September. The first ones should be in service with hauliers in 2021.

Changes to the way in which trucks are propelled should not be conflated with a simultaneous switch to driverless technology insists Gerrit Marx, President, Commercial and Specialty Vehicles at CNH Industrial, Iveco's parent company. "Drivers are here to stay for the next decades," he states. "Fully-autonomous is a niche."

A key reason for Iveco to embrace batteries and fuel-cells is the need for truck manufacturers to reduce the CO2 emissions of their products by 15% by 2025 under European legislation. The new vehicles will help Iveco reach this target even though they will be sold as Nikolas.

Nikola and Iveco revealed a full-scale mock-up of the battery-electric model at Iveco's headquarters in Turin, Italy, a mere three months after their partnership was announced. "We've pulled off something that most truck manufacturers would take three years to achieve," Milton boasts.

Projected sales volumes for TRE have yet to be announced. Nor is there any news on prices. However, Iveco and Nikola aim to match or beat the equivalent diesel models so far as total cost of ownership is concerned. The fuel-cell version is said to be potentially 10 per cent to 20 per cent less expensive to acquire and run than a diesel.

Nikola has also developed day- and sleeper-cab tractor units for sale in North America under the Nikola One and Nikola Two banners. Brewer Anheuser-Busch has ordered 800 fuel-cell models for use in its North American distribution operation. The first one recently went into service.

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Having seen the good, the bad and the ugly of the haulage business over the years, the Harrison family from Sheffield is now tasting success with Meadowhall Transport. By **Matthew Eisenegger**

Yorkshire more!

You really can't beat a proper Yorkshire greeting. As we turn up at Harrison's Yard in Sheffield – home to Meadowhall Transport – less than 24 hours after that part of South Yorkshire had been washed out by flash floods, the outstretched hand of the company's Managing Director, Paul Harrison, welcomes me with a pumping handshake and a not-so-broad south Yorkshire accent. "Do you want a brew?", he asks.

In the office are Paul's dad Willie and his son Bradley, 22, known as Brad. Both the older and younger of the current three generations have been summoned. We do the introductions and, as a fellow Yorkshire man, I suggest we settle down for a 'reet good chin wag'. The haulage yard of Meadowhall Transport is typical in its layout; the former scrap yard has the redbrick gate office with the old weighbridge outside the window, while further down there is a workshop and another building that is the home to the company's in-house maintenance business (Merlin Trucks).

History lesson

The question that sets the ball rolling, is regarding the origins of the company. Paul immediately jumps in with the potted history. "Including Brad, the company goes back five generations. The original business was started by my great-grandad, Sid Harrison, back in the 1940s," he explains. "Sid had two sons – Sid Junior and Wilfred, my grandad and – after denationalisation – two haulage businesses were formed. One being Wilfred Harrison Transport and the other Sid Harrison Transport, which many will remember running bright Red Scammells. From there, my dad and his brother Michael worked for Wilfred Harrison Transport until its closure, due to the compulsory purchase order in May 1994".

Throughout that period, the business grew steadily, offering its services to the local industry and, in particular, the thriving Sheffield steel mills. The Harrison brothers also ran a busy truck service and repair business and, in the mid-1970s, took on a DAF service and parts franchise under the name of Harbro Trucks.

With a need to better connect Rotherham to the M1 and ease congestion, local planners wanted to improve and modernise the road infrastructure. Due to Harrison's prime location on the Bawtry Road, the yard sat right in the way of the planned new dual carriageway and roundabout. Even before Paul started work, there was a certain degree of uncertainty surrounding the company's premises and it was only going to be a matter of time, before the bulldozers moved in.

The one thing Paul did know as a teenager was that he wanted to earn money. At one point, he had two paper rounds and later, while at college, he worked the 4.30am shift at a local bakers to earn cash. Having finished his diploma in business studies on the Friday, the following Monday morning (1 June 1987) Paul was contemplating his future, but road transport was not on his agenda. With his dashing good looks he started to think about taking some time out – maybe become a holiday rep in Ibiza, or even a Red Coat at Butlins. But any aspirations he had were quickly dashed in an instant. "I was in bed and my mum shouted up to tell me my dad was on the phone. He asked me what I was doing and I told him I was in bed. 'Never mind in bed, get dressed and get down here, you can find out what I do for a living' was his response. And the rest, as they say, is history."

Starting out

Very soon, Paul's newly-learned business skills were put to good use, quickly identifying that various elements of the family business weren't making money. His dad took advice from his son and immediately corrected the problems. Paul spent the rest of ►

“

You've got customers that have lost their haulage contractor as well as drivers and fitters that are out of work, so now's your chance

”

his time in the business helping to run the workshop and haulage operation in a management role.

When the axe officially fell on the business in the May of 1994, Paul – still only in his mid-20s – had some thinking to do. “My dad asked me what I was going to do with my future and pointed out that with the closure of the business, it was a good time to become a haulage contractor. ‘You’ve got customers that have lost their haulage contractor as well as drivers and fitters that are out of work, so now’s your chance,’ he told me.”

With a knack for the haulage business – and armed with a £1,600 redundancy money – Paul set out to plough his own furrow. The decision was quickly made to purchase the equipment and assets from the old business. Joining him on the journey was his sister Vicky, who Paul persuaded to leave a good job in a recruitment company to “come and have a go”.

Together the siblings set about building a business, the first step being securing funding to buy the equipment and assets. “Most banks weren’t interested, but through our accountant we found one that would take us on. But we had to turn to my father to act as a guarantor,” explains Paul. They found premises and got the business started with Paul out on the road visiting new and old customers.

Overcoming adversity

The family’s hard work in making the business a success soon began to bear fruit. But early on into the new venture, tragedy struck when Paul’s uncle, Michael – who joined to run the workshop – suffered

a massive heart attack and died aged 52, which shook the company to its core.

Despite this horrendous ordeal, Meadowhall Transport grew quickly, picking up contracts with a local steel company specialising in steel reinforcement and mesh – and another with a concrete block company that, in itself, required dedicated vehicles. Six eight-wheelers with brick grabs and six artics with centre-mounted cranes needed to be acquired and collectively, these two contracts accounted for 80 per cent of the business.

The company currently runs a mixed fleet of 17 trucks and buys both new and used vehicles. This traditional approach, Paul feels, has allowed the company to weather the storms of recession. It has been able to de-fleet quickly – if needed – and move vehicles on without any exposure to finance settlements. So what makes the job hard? Paul, ever the optimist, looks at it from a positive angle: “Let’s turn that one on its head, what’s made the job better?” he muses. “The biggest thing in our job is communication, in my dad’s old company the drivers left for the day and you couldn’t get hold of them to give them a back load until they rang in. Now we have trackers on all of our vehicles as well as phones, which has made the job so much easier. We also have dash cams that have saved us money in insurance claims”.

One moment that did help the business run more smoothly was when it became aware of FORS and what the accreditation could offer. Meadowhall Transport holds FORS Bronze accreditation and Brad is also a FORS Practitioner. On Paul’s own



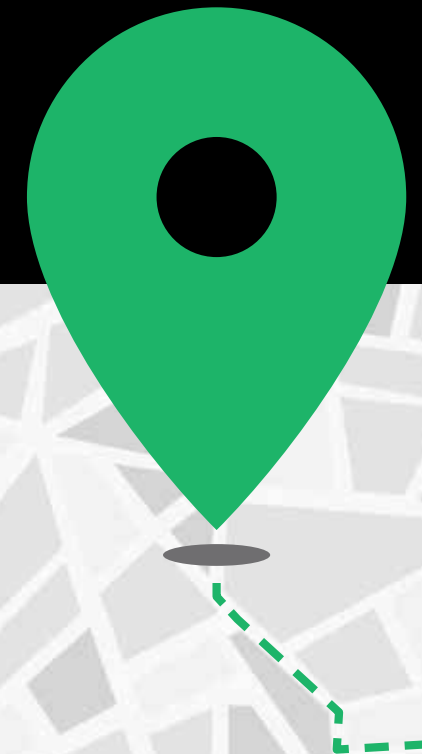
From left: Paul Harrison, Managing Director, works alongside his father Willie and son Brad at Meadowhall Transport



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“

The biggest thing in our job is communication. We have trackers on all of our vehicles as well as phones

”

admission, FORS has really worked for them by helping put proper procedures into place, as well as highlighting what they were doing right before adapting the audit process.

“We are just approaching our fifth audit for our FORS accreditation. It was something that initially, like many others, was for contractual reasons, but it has since become a standard for best practice within our business. The scheme enables the company to become more transparent, while, at the same time, educating employees, which helps to reduce both our carbon footprint as a company and minimise incidents.

“The scheme is constantly updating and moving with the times to ensure that we, as FORS operators, are always one step ahead of the competition in all aspects of our operations,” he adds. “We are finding that more and more customers are asking the question ‘Do you know about FORS?’ to which we can proudly state our compliance and that we are certified to visit the sites in question.

Paul says FORS has also helped the company keep up to date in an ever-changing industry, while also making life easier for management, office staff and drivers alike. “Everyone knows that when they see the FORS badge that they are dealing with a forward-thinking, reputable haulier,” he says. “That can only be good for

our image as both a service provider and an employer.”

Future goals?

Paul's aspirations for the company are maybe not what you'd expect – there's no talk of doubling fleet size or profit here. “We need to up our game – we had run older vehicles, but I knew we needed to be running at Euro VI, so we have adopted a proper replacement plan. We will be running an entire Euro VI fleet very soon.”

The longer term plan for the company involves Paul's son Brad. “He's a bright lad,” says proud dad Paul. “We never forced him join the company and were more than happy for him to do his own thing, but he decided to come here and does a great job on the maintenance side in Merlin Truck.”

Paul is also full of praise for his own father, Willie who, despite retiring over 20 years ago, has been instrumental to the success of the business. Paul says his dad's wisdom and knowledge of the industry – especially in the changing environment – has been invaluable. “He isn't an educated man, but he is a clever man and a good businessman,” says Paul. “I have so much to thank him for – he gave me the financial assistance and confidence to enter the world of haulage and the lifetime of guidance and experience I have gained from him has been priceless.”

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State of mind

Mental health is a subject that has a growing presence in the workplace.

John Challen looks at some of the recent developments

“Our company has recognised that we work in a male-dominated environment and it's no secret that men find it difficult to talk about their feelings”

The transport sector has become more understanding about the health – both physical and mental – of its workforce in recent years. A large national campaign surrounding mental health has ensured the subject has become a regular topic of conversation.

To encourage members to prioritise employee mental health as a staff safety issue, FORS has teamed up with mental health charity Mates in Mind. Under the terms of the arrangement, FORS members have access to the employer mental health guidance resources offered by Mates in Mind and regular news updates regarding the latest developments in mental health in the workplace.

“Working alongside programmes such as FORS, Mates in Mind is able to deliver the

support education, resources and materials organisations need to improve the mental health of their workforces,” says Martin Lockham, Growth Development Manager at Mates in Mind.

Mates in Mind was specifically set up by the Health in Construction Leadership Group (HCLG) to provide industry employers with guidance to support the mental health of its workforce. Supported by the British Safety Council, the charity's aim is to improve mental health within the UK construction industry. By 2025, Mates in Mind hopes to have reached 75 per cent of the construction industry by raising awareness, encouraging people to get help and breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness.

Since it was established in September 2016, the range of services offered by Mates in Mind has now expanded across various supply chain and related industries. As a FORS Associate, the charity hopes to extend its expertise to organisations across road transport.

More company conversations

As previously mentioned, mental health is fast-becoming an important work factor and this is seen in the number of companies that have established specific approaches to dealing with and helping staff who are struggling. Speaking at the 2019 FORS Members' Conference, Natalie Geraghty, Head of

Customer and Communications at Kier, explained her company's approach. The aim within Kier, she said, was to remove the stigma that is attached to mental health issues and to ensure that the topic of mental health should be on every agenda in every meeting, even if it is just a five-minute conversation.

“Our company has recognised that we work in a male-dominated environment and it's no secret that men find it difficult to talk about their feelings,” she said.

At the conference, Geraghty explained how the company had introduced a series of videos, including one about an operative called Charlie who experienced a near-miss that changed his life and affected his mental health and wellbeing. In total, there were six videos introduced over the course of the first half of 2019 that had a big impact online and these were then followed up with blogs that attracted more than 1,000 views.

In one of the blogs, the story was told of ‘Gary’, who had recovered physically from an incident but retained the mental scars. When he returned to work eight months later, Gary had a breakdown and still now struggles to get back into a vehicle. “Mental health shouldn't be competitive, we need to stick together – just as we do with safety. We should all be tackling these difficult issues in the same way,” says Geraghty.



There are several key messages that Kier is trying to get across to its workforce and into the wider community, specifically that people don't have to suffer alone and they are aware that life is hard and it doesn't stop with work.

Support is always available within the company and co-workers are encouraged to look out for each other.

“Ask someone twice if they are OK because they will always say they are fine the first time you ask them,” states Geraghty.

● More information about mental health can be found at www.matesinmind.org

Mates in Mind is raising awareness, encouraging people to get help and breaking the stigma surrounding mental illness



Driver health: ignore it at your own peril!!

● By Andrew Drewary FCILT
Road Safety Consultant at Road Safety Smart

We all know employers have a duty of care under health and safety legislation to ensure their employees are fit to carry out the duties expected of them on a daily basis. For most employers, this is not an issue that causes them too much concern for employees who are depot- or office-based.

However, driver health is still a taboo subject for fleet operators, regardless of the type of vehicle driven by their employees. Asking a driver ‘are you fit to drive?’ on a daily basis seems to be a very difficult question.

The majority of employers find it an uncomfortable subject and do not know how to take positive steps to deal with it. Unfortunately, those employers who continue to ignore this issue do so at their own peril, as the consequences of not proactively tackling the issue far outweigh the uncomfortable conversations they should be

having with their drivers. One of the biggest excuses used by employers is: “We can't ask questions about health because of general data protection regulations (GDPR).” However, this is a myth and is used as an easy get-out clause.

Employers need to know about the health conditions their drivers suffer with and the medication they take, not just from a driver well-being standpoint, but to ensure the validity of their fleet motor insurance policy.

The police and insurance companies are undertaking more and more exhaustive investigations into the health of drivers, especially following a serious or fatal collision. If it is found a medical condition is a contributing factor, the driver and the employer may be prosecuted and any motor insurance policy may be invalid.

With the average insurance claim settlement for a fatality in the region of £2.25m, how many fleet operators could cover that loss if their insurance company refused to pay out?

Therefore, how big an issue is the health

of drivers? In 2017, Direct Line Insurance conducted a survey and estimated that 25% of drivers (11 million) are driving with some sort of medical condition and 10% (4.4 million) are driving with a condition that affects their entitlement to drive.

These figures are more concerning because the large majority of employers and drivers do not know what medical conditions need to be reported to the DVLA. What makes this more frightening is, for vocational drivers, there are more than 175 medical conditions that are reportable to the DVLA, of which 164 are mandatory reportable medical conditions.

It is a criminal offence not to report to the DVLA any mandatory medical condition or any that affects the ability to drive safely. Failure to report such medical conditions will result in a £1,000 fine for each unreported case.

A full list of the conditions reportable to the DVLA can be found at the following link: www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

To make this process easier, DVLA will soon be launching a facility for vocational drivers to report medical conditions online.

Unfortunately, the issue of driver health is going to get worse over the coming years due to the fact we are part of an aging population. Change is starting to take shape as more fleet operators realise they cannot continue to ignore the issue. A number of fleet operators have added the simple question: ‘Are you fit to drive today?’ as the last question to the vehicle first-use walkaround checklist.

In summary, fleet operators need to implement robust measures to identify, educate and support their drivers.

There are numerous processes and procedures they can implement to manage this issue which should be detailed in a specific ‘Managing Driver Health’ company policy. More importantly, employers and employees need to have better engagement and channels of communication and self-reporting should be encouraged.

Our survey says...

The results from the FORS satisfaction survey for 2019 are in and they make for encouraging reading

FORS is committed to providing the best service to its members, so it was very welcoming to see the results of the latest satisfaction survey – conducted in late 2019 – which attracted 450 responses. This figure was also pleasing because it represented a 22 per cent increase on the numbers who responded in 2018. Of the 450 respondents, 245 were Bronze members, 123 Silver and 45 were Gold. The remainder were either dormant, registered or didn't specify.

There were a number of subjects and areas of FORS accreditation that respondents were quizzed on. The following is a taste of the levels of satisfaction in each area.

Maintaining FORS accreditation

A total of 71 per cent of respondents said they intend to maintain their accreditation longer than 12 months, which represents a six per cent increase on last year's findings. Of the 71 per cent, 57 per cent intend to maintain their accreditation for at least the next five years.

Value of FORS contracts

The FORS satisfaction survey established that the average number of contracts specifying FORS for Bronze members was 26 per cent, 38 per cent for Silver members and 51 per cent for Gold members.

It is estimated that £7.3 billion worth of contracts specifies FORS each year. The value of FORS contracts is significant for accredited companies and is one of the key benefits of FORS.

Cost of FORS

Of those surveyed, 80 per cent felt that FORS represents acceptable or good value, which is a two per cent increase from last year.

FORS Auditors

Respondents were asked to rate their auditor's knowledgeability, professionalism and impartiality. The findings were overwhelmingly positive with

85 per cent or more of respondents rating auditors good or very good for each category, which again represents a small increase (two per cent) on last year's survey.

FORS Helpline

Of the 399 respondents who used the FORS helpline, 71 per cent found their experience to have been either good or very good.

This represents a four per cent increase on last year's findings, showing the team has taken members' previous comments on board when working on improving the service.

FORS eNews

The survey found that 96 per cent of respondents read the FORS eNews and, of those, 97 per cent found it to be informative or very informative.

Again, these numbers represent a small increase of three per cent compared with last year's survey results.

Members are encouraged to read the FORS eNews as it has important information about the scheme and also the industry.

FORS Benefits

It is pleasing to see so many of those who responded are happy with the benefits on offer and the help that they provide.

Training

Unsurprisingly, 95 per cent of respondents knew about training offered through FORS, the highest of any benefit. Of that number, 62 per cent had used

these benefits – again, the highest of any benefit. FORS eLearning was by far the most popular benefit used by 93 per cent of members surveyed. FORS eLearning was also the benefit which respondents were most aware of, with only one per cent of respondents not being aware that it existed.

Toolkits

Those surveyed seemed to be similarly aware of the free toolkits (92 per cent) as they were of the training (95 per cent). Around two thirds of respondents have used the toolkits, with the Bronze audit toolkit and the Counter terrorism toolkit being most popular.

Guides

When compared with the other benefits, those surveyed seemed to be far less aware of the free guides available to FORS members. On average 19 per cent of those surveyed were not aware of the guides being available. Moreover, 52 per cent of those who were aware of the guides had not used them.

Indirect benefits of joining FORS

In addition to the main benefits, there are several other elements that FORS members can take advantage of, one of which is insurance. Around a quarter (24 per cent) of those surveyed found that, as a result of joining FORS, the cost of their annual fleet insurance had reduced.

Of those, 47 per cent believed the reduction was more than £1,000, with a quarter (26 per cent) believing it was by more than £5,000.

Two thirds (66 per cent) of those surveyed also believed that they received other indirect benefits as a result of being a FORS member.

The most common benefit observed was increased work won over competitors and improved customer satisfaction, which were both observed by around one third of those who responded (38 per cent and 32 per cent respectively).

Just over a tenth of respondents also observed improved employee satisfaction, business expansion and recognition awards since they joined FORS.



Weight-loss programs

There is work to be done when it comes to van and LCV load levels. **Richard Drinkwater**, Head of Business Development at SvTech, analyses the market

“Extrapolate the figure out to the FTA's quoted vehicle number and we could be looking at two million overloaded or mechanically unsound vehicles on the roads”

The FTA believes there are around four million LCVs on the road – and, based upon the DVSA's most recent enforcement figures, it is estimated that many of these are travelling overloaded. In 2018-2019, the DVSA stopped more than 12,100 LCVs suspected of overloading and mechanical failure. Of these, 6,038 were issued with prohibitions – that's just over 49 per cent; essentially one in two. Extrapolate the figure out to the FTA's quoted vehicle number and we could be looking at two million overloaded or mechanically unsound vehicles on the road.

But those numbers may only be the tip of the iceberg. Consider that most of the UK's van fleet is thought to be under 3,500kg gross vehicle weight (GVW). And what we at SvTech have witnessed, in most cases, is that it is vans in the 2,000-3,200kg range that are more likely to be overloaded. These vehicles are cheaper, practical and easy to drive – and have lots of space. But, critically, it's that fact that goes against them in the loading stakes. I have witnessed well over a tonne loaded in the back of a Volkswagen Transporter, with racking either side, heavy tools and a driver and passenger. This vehicle was overweight on the GVW, the rear axle design weight and, more importantly from a safety perspective, the tyres had an insufficient load rating for that overloaded back axle. In the eyes of a DVSA officer, that would constitute three offences, with the tyres being the most unsafe aspect and potentially bringing more severe punishment.

Wheel worries

Strangely, the tyre overload is the most forgotten about aspect in all of this and we see this reflected across all of our markets, from motorhomes to horseboxes, minibuses to 4x4s. When we uprate vehicles, we often have to recommend a rim and/or tyre change in conjunction with rear axle air assist to achieve the higher weights. It's not just a suspension change.

Additionally, plenty of vans have alloys fitted; but these are often not up to the job. It's imperative that you check the alloy load rating, which is often found on the inside. If you can't find it, contact the manufacturer. As the driver, it would be your responsibility were you to be stopped – and ignorance is not an excuse in the eyes of the law. However, fleet managers need to be made aware of this aspect of overloading. And, perhaps more pertinently, it should be the compliance officers who need to know this and be made more aware of the overloading issue as a whole.

The FORS Standard needs to be upheld across the UK's LCV market, as it's not just the HGV fleet that need to be well marshalled. Smaller operators need reminders of their loading tolerances prior to being stopped by the DVSA or caught on one of the 15+ smart motorway weigh-in-motion sensors around the UK. These sensors are only going to increase in number as the Department of Transport looks to increase revenue. Hence it is crucial for everyone responsible for a fleet – or even just one van – to know what their maximum payload is in each vehicle in operation.

There will be a few shocks when these vans are weighed. SvTech often attends trade shows and customers' premises to weigh vehicles and shock is the over-riding reaction that we witness, along with the words “I had no idea....”

An easy mistake to make

To give you an example of how easy it is to overload a regular van, I recently had a windscreen replaced. While the engineer was on my drive, I asked him if I could look in the back of his 2,600kg van. His vehicle was racked for 10 windscreens and he believed that, fully loaded, he would not be overweight. Having looked at his VIN plate and knowing the unladen van weight, I believe that – fully loaded – he would be more than 300kg overweight, thus threatening his insurance, his licence and, ultimately, his job. His tyres were not suitable either. How many more of his colleagues would be in the same situation? Fortunately, we would be able to help, as most of these vans can be uprated by 200-300kg and we have precedent braking and suspension test reports logged with the DVLA to cover these uprates.



As a member of the SMMT, SvTech is in touch with proposed legislation changes, enforcement statistics and the market in general, and we are aware of the DoT's growing interest in the fleet arena, hence the focus on solving the LCV overloading problem.

To help, we designed a Load Distribution Analysis (LDA) program to advise vehicle users on how to stay safely within their GVW and individual axle weights. This is available for free on our website (www.svtech.co.uk/lda) and has unlimited usage. Vehicles must be

weighed though. Compliance is very important within business, but it must extend towards vehicle payloads as well. This evidently is overlooked on a large scale, putting the drivers' livelihoods in jeopardy, as well as their safety, and that of other road-users. Combine this situation with the DoT's desire to focus the LCV market, and it may be an issue you have to deal with sooner than you think. Get your vehicles weighed in their most laden condition, so you know your worst case scenario, and you can then resolve the problem.

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Ready to roll

The tyre market has changed significantly in just a short space of time. Fleets have far more choice than a decade ago and tyres are increasingly packed with new technologies. **Matthew Eisenegger** investigates

James Walker,
Commercial Director
of Fraikin



“**W**hen specifying a new vehicle, there’s a huge choice of tyre brands, tread patterns and sizes available – and the best firms will use this as an opportunity to ensure assets are delivered on the optimum rubber for the job.” Those are the words of James Walker, Commercial Director of Fraikin, writing in the firm’s ‘What you need to know about tyre technology’ guidebook.

As a supplier to many of the largest FORS-accredited fleets, Fraikin is responsible for ensuring the optimum rubber ends up on vehicles. “Getting tyre specification correct at the outset – and ensuring it is matched throughout the life of the vehicle – means you’ll benefit from maximum fuel efficiency, uptime and safety from the first mile,” says Walker.

And it’s the very latest generation of tyres that are helping fleets unlock new levels of performance across the board – with developments in materials, tread features and associated technologies.

Wind the clock back to pre-EU Tyre Labelling in 2012 and tyre manufacturers’ number one concern was longevity; dictated largely by the materials used in tyre construction. The arrival of EU Tyre Labelling legislation saw every tyre being rated based on three new factors

– rolling resistance, wet grip and noise. And the focus on rolling resistance in particular meant manufacturers had to come up with innovative ways to make their tyres even more fuel efficient.

Tech spec changes

One of the biggest developments has been a move from carbon black to integrating a high percentage of silica in the tread. As development has continued, firms such as Michelin now use more silica than ever before – in the bead, sidewalls, shoulders and tread. And by doing so, the French manufacturer’s tyres have further reduced rolling resistance and fuel consumption, without compromising longevity.

“Low rolling resistance ‘Energy’ tyres were originally for long distance fleets travelling at high average speeds,” recalls Rob Blurton, Michelin’s

Technical Manager – Truck & Bus. “But now, based on what we’ve learned with silica, we’ve been able to introduce our X Multi Energy regional tyre range for fleets that still want great longevity, but that also have an eye firmly on their fuel bills.”

The net result of these new technologies is greater tyre choice, meaning fleets are more likely to find a policy tailored for precisely their type of operation and priorities.

“Of course with more choice comes a greater likelihood of fitting the wrong tyres too,” warns Blurton. “So it’s important to seek expert advice from your tyre manufacturer or dealer, to ensure you are running on the best possible tyres for the job.”

Smarter manufacturing

Another notable advance in tyre development has

come from improved manufacturing processes, especially the use of 3D metal printing technologies which enable manufacturers to construct tyres with new grooves which emerge over the tyre’s life, for enhanced mobility.

“We call this Regenion – and it’s critical to our ability to design a tyre that provides excellent performance over a very long life,” explains Blurton. “Essentially, as the tyre wears, hidden grooves begin to appear, ensuring a continuously high level of grip. Take our new 295/80 R 22.5 X Coach Z for example – when it’s brand new, you’ll see three prominent grooves going all the way around the tyre. But look at the same tyre when it’s two-thirds worn and there will be five. Two entirely new ones will have opened up and also be available to be regrooved. It’s how we can be so confident in the performance of our

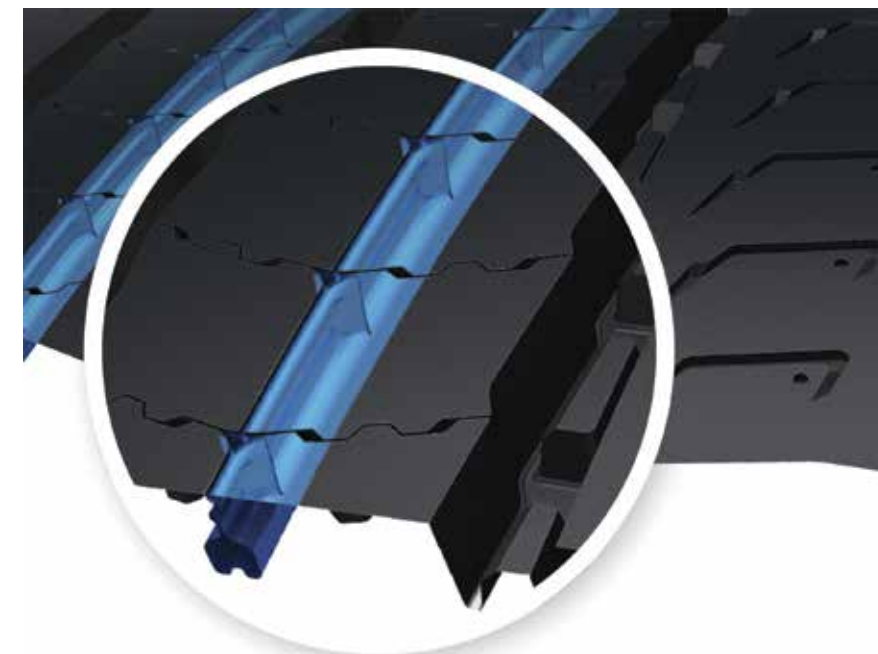


Rob Blurton, Michelin’s
Technical Manager

RIGHT: 3D metal printing technologies enable manufacturers to construct tyres with new grooves which emerge over the tyre's life

► tyres right down to the last millimetre of legal tread."

These new manufacturing techniques are also behind other developments, enabling firms like Michelin to create increasingly more sophisticated sipes – opening up new biting edges to maintain high levels of grip even as a tyre wears. And under the rubber too, there's more robust steel cabling, making tyres lighter and leading to better endurance and lower rolling resistance.



North American trials

Across the Atlantic, Aperia Technologies has been pioneering a new system that is widely expected to reach European shores, in partnership with a major tyre manufacturer. Named Halo, it promises to eliminate complexity by automatically managing air pressure in

commercial vehicle tyres. With each wheel rotation, the Halo device monitors and adjusts tyre pressures, using a compact, self-powered pump which can be mounted to the hub in just 10 minutes.

Crucially, it's able to reduce pressure when tyres are running hotter and increase pressure on colder tyres to ensure tyres remain at the optimum pressure – plus its makers claim it's virtually maintenance free.

Alabama-based Greenbush Logistics has been involved in trials for more than two years and has reported an increase in fuel efficiency of around 1.5 per cent and extended tyre life of 20 per cent.

Provided the additional capital expenditure can be recovered within a reasonable period, it's one to keep an eye on.



Keep the wheels on

A detached wheel from a commercial vehicle has been likened to a bouncing bomb, hurtling down the road and potentially colliding with other road users at an equivalent force of around 10 tonnes.

While, thankfully, it isn't a scenario that happens too often, there are enough stories in the news to see that incidents do occur – and the consequences can be devastating.

There are many reasons why a wheel may come off a moving commercial vehicle and even the best-maintained fleets can be susceptible. But that could now all be changing, as British firm Wheely-Safe has introduced a technology that detects the onset of wheel loss before detachment – as well as flagging potential brake or hub issues that could result in a fire.

With Wheely-Safe's patented technology fitted, a driver would receive an alert the instant a potential wheel loss issue is



the Wheely-Safe in-cab alert display unit

detected, no matter what speed they are travelling, or in what weather conditions, allowing them to pull over safely.

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Be safe, be smart

Training drivers to use smart motorways is vital, if well-publicised dangers are to be avoided. By **Richard Simpson**

Smart motorways have been grabbing headlines for all the wrong reasons lately, after some well-publicised campaigns following incidents involving broken-down vehicles.

Initially conceived as a way of increasing capacity by introducing technology as an alternative to building extra lanes, the term 'smart motorway' covers three different packages of changes to a conventional motorway.

The simplest of these is the controlled motorway, where there are three or more lanes and a hard-shoulder, but the standard national speed limit of 70mph can be reduced if required on individual lanes by signs on overhead gantries. Unlike the 'advisory' reduced maximum speeds shown by amber signs on the central reservation, the overhead signs featuring a figure in a red circle are legally enforceable.

Reducing the speed limit allows the motorway to flow more traffic at busy times: 40mph is the optimum speed for flowing traffic volume.

More complex – and controversial – are the smart motorways with 'all-lane running', which is to say there is no hard shoulder for disabled vehicles or emergency services. Alternatives are smart motorways that have a 'dynamic hard shoulder' that can be opened as a running lane should conditions require it. Sometimes the dynamic hard shoulder is only available to vehicles leaving at the next junction.

These latter two types have roadside 'refuges', laybys that are reserved for break-downs and other casualty vehicles, and have emergency telephones. Lane closures are signalled by a red X sign on the overhead gantry. It is an offence to drive under a red X sign.



Traffic technology

Traffic sensors measure traffic speed and density, and speed cameras become active when the overhead gantry signs are illuminated. Smart motorways are also monitored live by CCTV cameras operated by Highways England.

It is difficult to obtain any robust figures as to whether motorways are made safer by being made smarter, not least because installing the 'smart' infrastructure is a lengthy process, which, in itself, sees traffic disrupted with temporary speed limits and lane closures.

Highways England points to data collected from the UK's first smart motorway: the M42; which had a dynamic hard shoulder installed in 2006.

This shows that journey reliability improved by 22 per cent, personal injuries reduced by more than half and, where incidents did occur, severity was much lower overall with (as of the start of last year) zero fatalities and fewer seriously injured since conversion. It maintains that data from the more recent 'smart' section of the M25 is showing similar trends.

However, that view was challenged by a number of organisations in a BBC TV documentary broadcast earlier this year, which claimed that 'near-misses' involving stationary vehicles rose by a factor of 20 after introduction of smart technology to the M25. Former roads minister Sir Mike Penning said he had been misled into extending the smart motorways scheme after the success of the M42 trials. For

instance, the distance between the safe refuges had been extended from 800m to 2,500m on newer smart motorways.

Launching a report on smart motorways by the all-party parliamentary group on roadside rescue and recovery, Sir Mike said the roll-out had: "been conducted with a shocking degree of carelessness – smart motorways today do not resemble the designs I signed off as roads minister. And Highways England appear to have casually ignored the commitments they made to the House of Commons in 2016. That is not acceptable."

While Sir Mike maintains that smart motorway conversions should be stopped – and changes made to existing stretches – the fact remains that drivers are going to be using them for some time

to come although there is a Government 'stocktake' in progress.

Smart sense

Proponents and opponents of smart motorways agree that the most dangerous moments come when a vehicle breaks down. Highways England's advice is to pull over to the left-hand lane, activate hazard warning lights and either stop in the next refuge (indicated by orange signs) or leave at the next junction.

If the vehicle stops before you can do this, then get as close as possible to the left-hand side of the road and, if possible and safe, exit the vehicle via the nearside, then call 999. If you have to remain in the vehicle, keep your seat belt on. Do not attempt to deploy a warning triangle.

The idea is that the alerted control room will then close the lane using the red X sign – and send help. Highways England maintains that the emergency refuge areas are built to a specification and are big enough for an HGV and a recovery vehicle, although some drivers will dispute the practicalities of this.

It is obvious that the safety of smart motorways can be maximised only when all drivers understand how they work, what the signage means, and what to do either if their own vehicle breaks down or if they encounter a broken-down vehicle.

That information can be found in the latest issue of the Highway Code.

The FORS D4 driving standard for the Bronze award requires that drivers should have personal development plans (PDPs) that include training "relevant to the operating environment and the risks identified" and that this should be "progressive



and aligned to Driver Certificate of Professional Competence where relevant."

Various trainers now offer dedicated Driver CPC courses on driving on smart motorways, with sector-specific modules being available for freight and passenger drivers. These provide competent and verifiable relevant training.

But it's worth noting that drivers of smaller vehicles are probably at the most personal risk should their car, van or motorcycle break down on a smart motorway. FORS Bronze D4 'Driving Standard' policy is that all members' drivers should have access to a copy of the Highway Code, but reminders also have a key role to play.

Highways England itself provides an on-line educational guide to the safe use of smart motorways, including guidance on the law, and practical advice with text, graphics and videos. Topics covered include breakdowns, lane closures, variable speed limits and lane discipline: all vital to safe driving on smart motorways.

- See <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/motorways>
- Further advice, including downloadable posters, visit: <https://gov.co.uk/guidance/how-to-drive-on-a-smart-motorway>

Make that call

One rainy winter night, my partner and I were driving south down the M42, a smart motorway, when the car in front of us in the overtaking lane lost its nearside front tyre and swerved across the motorway. We dialled 999 and, by referring to roadside

signage, were able to give the police an approximate location for the incident. About 10 minutes later, we were called back by the police who thanked us for our efforts and explained that they had been able to close the lane behind the stranded car, and thus avert a potential episode.



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Advertorial

Radar-based detection systems win hands down



How do you help a driver be aware of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, without fitting cameras and a sensors on every corner and surface of a vehicle – then presenting a multitude of images and alerts simultaneously, then expecting the information to be understood and acted upon? All this while trying to look at the road ahead and all the other information being delivered.

The answer is – you don't!

Aspöck is now providing advanced radar-based detection systems for commercial vehicles, designed to filter out false alarms and provide the driver with only necessary information and unobtrusive assistance.

Previously, manufacturers used ultrasonic sensors to detect objects, but the new radar technologies have significant advantages over those products.

For instance, ultrasonic systems require multiple sensors, sometimes up to six along the side of a vehicle, with all the accompanying wiring – and then there will still be blind spots. If you imagine how many you have on the rear of a car, you can imagine how many of these you would require on a commercial vehicle. One radar can cover the complete rear of a vehicle or up to eight metres on the side.

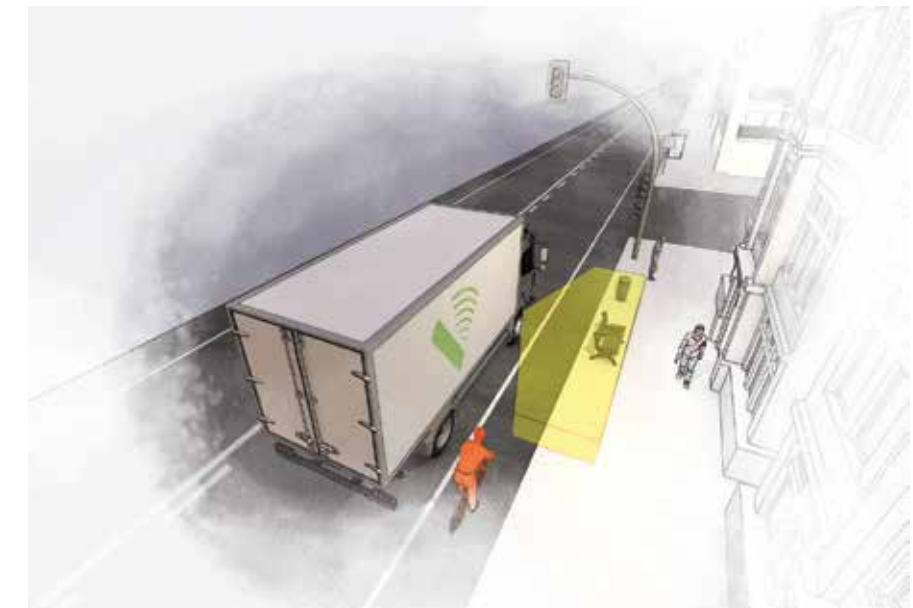
Ultrasonic systems will detect all objects constantly. Lamp posts, litter bins, other vehicles etc will provide repeated alerts and irritate the driver. The Aspöck radar will ignore any object which is not moving relative to the sensor – i.e. when sitting stationary in traffic, the system will fall silent unless movement is detected compared to the ultrasonic version, which will constantly make alerts.

Ultrasonic systems can also become unreliable and can even switch off in heavy fog, snow or in particular dirty applications. Radar will not be affected and is indeed often used within quarry environments, where dust and dirt are a constant.

The flexibility and intelligence of the radar allows it to be programmed individually to scan specific field widths or lengths. It can also be set to ignore vehicle components such as tail lifts, underruns and overhangs etc. and finally it can automatically activate cameras or alarms for the driver or pedestrians.

There are two main categories of system available for OE installation or retrofit.

The Radar Distance Control system provides the driver with a highly accurate reversing aid, which can detect any person walking behind a reversing vehicle and in the case of



trailers will automatically apply the brakes. It will also react to loading docks or other objects which may damage the rear of the vehicle during a reversing manoeuvre.

The sensor can be programmed to specific width of vehicle and a detection length. This allows it to be tuned so it does not activate in narrow spaces if not required. When used on trailers, the system is completely self-contained – there is no wiring needed to the truck and provided a modern brake system is fitted, the brakes can be automatically triggered.

The Side Defender provides detection of moving objects. The driver knows where the object is thanks to a small LED display with built-in beeper. At low speed, it provides the information drivers need without taking their eyes off the road. It sounds only when a moving object enters a specific zone and ignores stationary items. At speeds of 30kph or higher, the system becomes a lane change assistant, notifying the driver if a vehicle is within the area or lane they wish to enter.

Side Defender can be mounted at a suitable point to provide up to eight metres of constant detection. An equivalent ultrasonic version would require multiple sensors and there would still be blind spots.

These products represent the state of the art in technology and vehicle safety while creating a useable environment for the vehicle driver to operate effectively.



“Aspöck systems are designed to filter out false alarms and provide the driver with only necessary information”

Aspöck will be demonstrating the radar at the CV Show in Birmingham in April or contact sales@aspoeck.co.uk for more information

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- ✓ Before applying for the permit, some HGVs will need a **DVS Safe System** fitted.



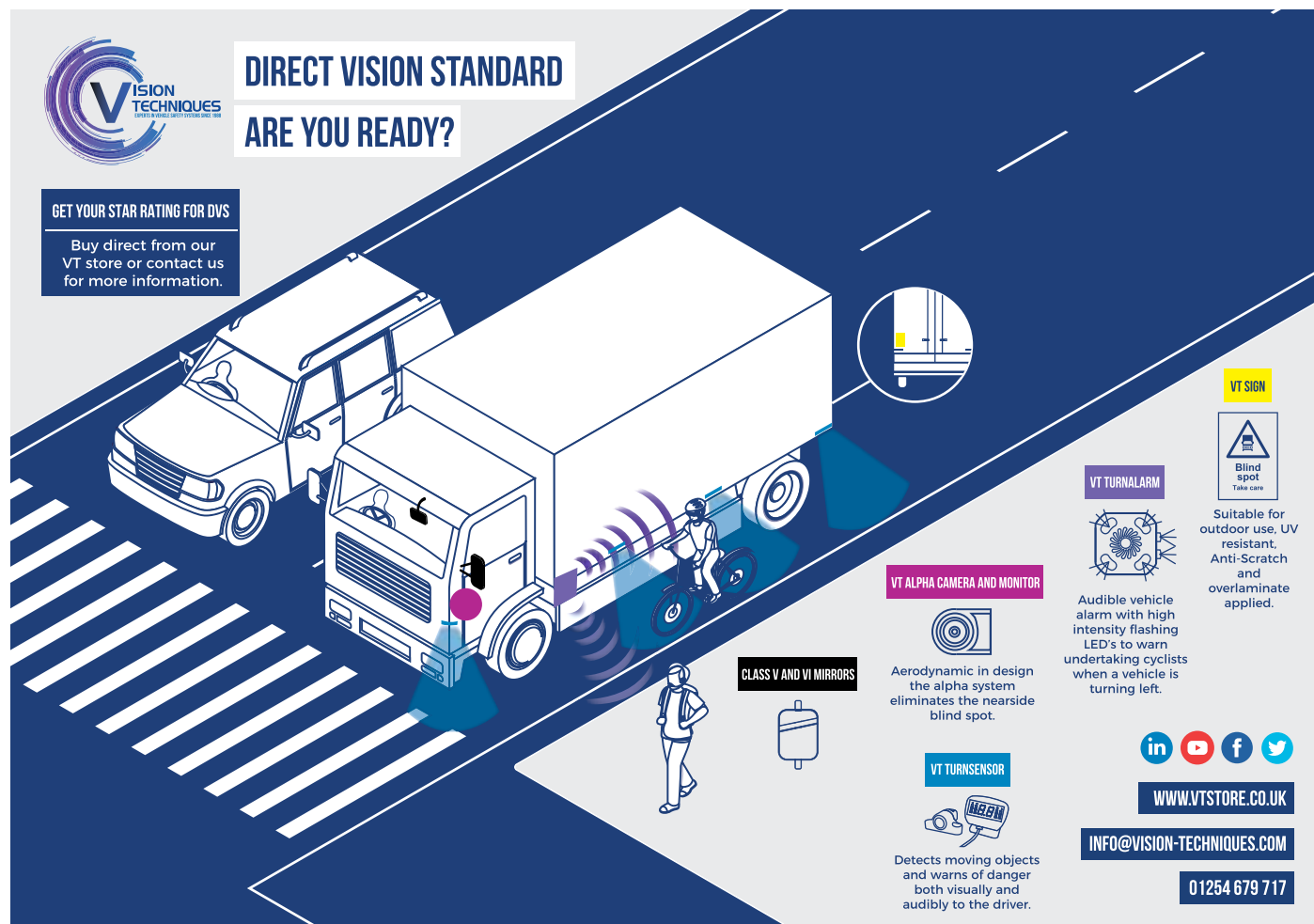
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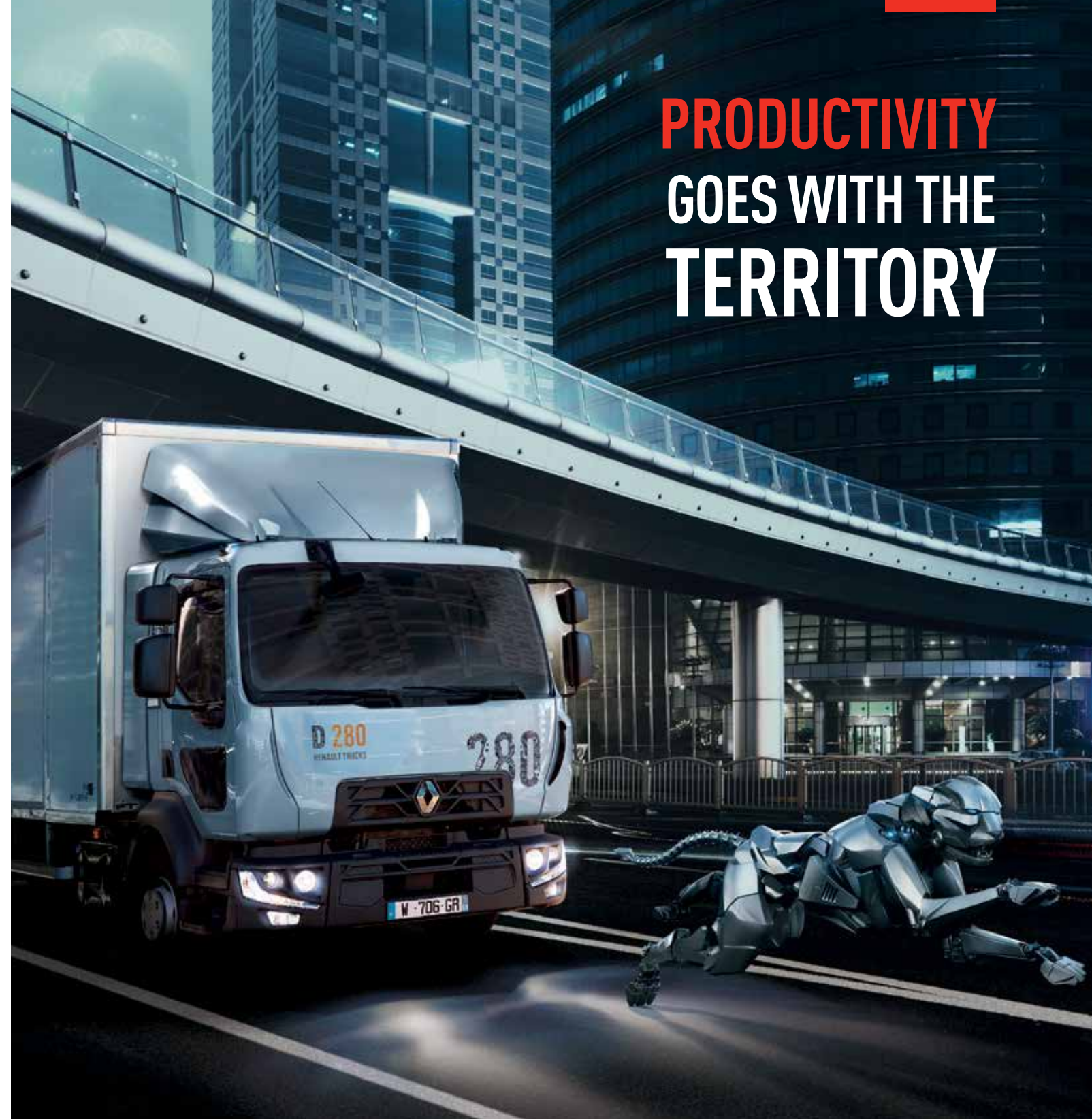


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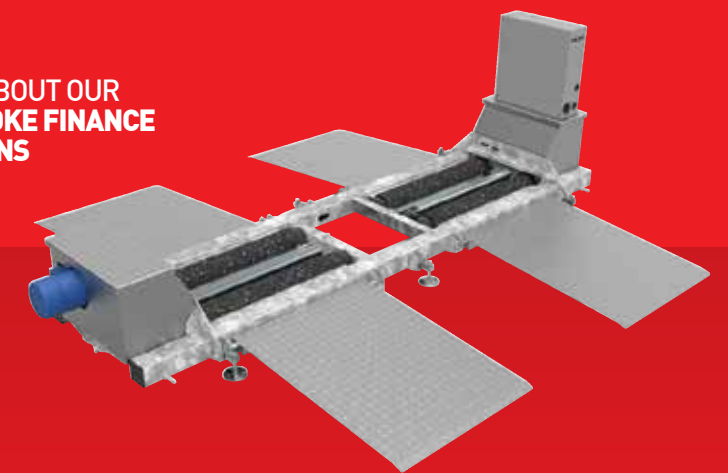


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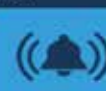
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