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Latest Motor Industry News

This Week's Briefing

Minister to put UK in fast lane with 80 mph motorway limit

Government urged to take action to cut £32bn cost of road crashes

Shortage of 'young' used cars could send prices soaring

Second hand car values rise after five months of decline

Used LCV market facing a 'black hole' in supply

Saab sells Spyker sports car subsidiary for $44m

Model update: BMW, Citroen, Hyundai, Kia, Mazda, SEAT

The Editor's View

IRONIC timing by the Department for Transport (DfT) has seen it release data that shows UK road casualty statistics are at an all-time low and within days confirm recent speculation that it would consult on raising the motorway speed limit for cars, light vans and motorcycles to 80 mph. Road crashes, according to the DfT cost the UK economy an estimated £32 billion a year. One of the benefits of an 80 mph speed limit, also says the DfT, is that the economy will benefit due to shorter journeys times. However, opponents of the 80 mph plan say the rise in the speed limit will result in more road crashes. In addition, the increase will compromise the Government's 'green' agenda with the 10 mph increase resulting in 20% more fuel being consumed and a 20% rise in exhaust emissions. The DfT says it is to consult on the speed limit rise, but the indications from Transport Secretary Philip Hammond are that his mind is made up. The Government is putting a desire to get the economy moving ahead of road safety and environmental considerations.

Fleet file

ING Car Lease name disappears as it merges with Alphabet

VEHICLE leasing and fleet management businesses Alphabet and ING Car Lease are to merge under the Alphabet name, it has been announced.

The decision came following last week's green light for Alphabet's €637 million acquisition of ING Car Lease by European Commission regulators *(Digest: September 29)*.

The newly enlarged Alphabet now has more than 460,000 financed cars under contract and is represented in a total of 18 countries. The integrated company ranks amongst the top five companies in the European market.

'Alphabet and ING Car Lease complement each other well in all business areas,' said Norbert van den Eijnden, head of Alphabet International and co-CEO of the new business. 'It's a perfect marriage that will open up many new opportunities for the company to become a genuine trendsetter in business mobility.'

Ed Frederiks, former CEO of ING Car Lease and co-CEO of the integrated company, said: ‘Our customers and prospects will benefit from our stronger positioning and we will be able to optimise our portfolio.’

The next step for the combined business will be to integrate both operationally and culturally.

Spokesmen for Alphabet and ING Car Lease said that no decisions had been taken about the future of staff or trading locations in the UK and it was ‘business as usual’ at both organisations. In the UK the combined fleet of the two companies is more than 100,000 units.

Drivers to steer the future of the fleet sector

DRIVERS will have more say in the future of fleet sector services than ever before with the advent of online and SMS feedback systems, it is claimed.

According to Rick Yarrow, managing director of Experteye, the fleet industry is on the cusp of a new era which will see driver attitudes play far greater importance in company strategies across the entire market, now that they are a voice that can be more easily heard.

He said: ‘To date, accessing driver opinion has been extremely laborious which has meant their feedback has been valued but very difficult to come by.

‘This has always been a huge frustration to contract hire and other fleet sector service companies, as well as the motor manufacturers, dealerships, fast fit companies and other providers into this market.

‘However, now that driver opinion can be received in far greater volume through tools such as our Touchpoint system , the voice of the driver can be heard immediately after events such as vehicle delivery, servicing, breakdown, the provision of a day hire vehicle, after an accident or any other service.

‘Their ideas can also be sought on other longer-term initiatives, and by receiving very large volumes of driver feedback on an on-going basis it means that their ideas and views can now play a far greater role in guiding the sector’s strategies in the years to come.

‘This is a very significant moment in our industry, because it opens the floodgates to enable a new age of strategic thinking.’

Until now, most companies have requested driver feedback using manual systems such as feedback cards in vehicles and telephone surveys, however these have resulted in very low sample sizes and opinion often being received too slowly to use.

‘By using an online approach, each driver event triggers an online satisfaction survey which is fed directly into real-time, web-based reports,’ concluded Yarrow.

‘This enables companies to tune into driver satisfaction far earlier than ever before, which is vital for faster resolution of problems and high quality client relations, as well as long-term fleet strategies.’

Firm adopts Groupon model to deliver big fleet discounts to SMEs

GROUP-buying online businesses that offer customers the opportunity to obtain discounts they could not achieve on their own are increasing in popularity - and now one has arrived in the fleet sector.

Groupon has rapidly expanded from its United States base to become operational in the UK and the global leader in online group buying is reaping the dividend of tough economic conditions in which personal and business budgets are tight.

Now Run Your Cars is aiming to bring significant discounts to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) running vehicle fleets.

Steve Whitmarsh, managing director of Run Your Cars, said: ‘Groupon has hit on a hugely successful business formula that sees consumers band together to buy goods and services at a block discount.

‘Effectively that is exactly the thinking behind Run Your Cars, which has used its purchasing power to negotiate discounts with leading providers of a wide range of fleet services.

‘In turn individual SMEs, which would not normally have access to the level of discounts we have negotiated, can make significant financial savings. We believe the discounts available would usually only be available to large fleet operators.

‘All fleet decision-makers are looking to make financial savings. We have calculated that our existing customers are saving on average £300 per vehicle per year. On a fleet of just 10 cars or vans that adds up to £3,000, which is a significant bottom line saving for a small business.’

For £5 (+VAT) per vehicle per month, Run Your Cars’ membership includes RAC breakdown and accident management services and access to a range of other fleet benefits at discounted rates from leading suppliers including: accident management and crash repair through Nationwide Crash Repair Centres, tyre repair and replacement via Kwik-Fit Fleet, car rental through Enterprise Rent a Car, windscreen replacement via Auto Windscreens and vehicle servicing through a network of 6,000 franchise and independent garages.

Further services, including risk management, are available at a small additional cost, while access to a range of vehicle funding options is also available.

The monthly fee also enables customers to manage their fleet using Run Your Cars’ own online fleet management system.

Savings obtainable to businesses by using Run Your Cars include more than £465 a year - almost £1,400 on a typical three-year/60,000-mile fleet replacement cycle - on an Audi A4 2.0 TDi SE; almost £250 a year or more than £740 over a similar operating cycle on a Vauxhall Astra 1.9 TDi; and more than £260 a year or almost £800 over a three-year operating cycle on a Ford Transit 2.2 TDCi 140ps.

The savings are based on a typical fleet vehicle requiring one service per year, two tyres and one third of a windscreen (on average a fleet vehicle will require a new windscreen every three years). The comparison is based on a like-for-like service at the same franchise dealer, Pirelli tyres from Kwik Fit, breakdown cover from the AA and windscreens sourced from Nationwide Motor Glass.

Leasing companies must provide ‘mobile’ fleet software solutions

THE fleet and leasing market must be able to provide information through new channels like mobile internet and smartphone apps in a bid to secure a competitive advantage.

Roger Smith, head of fleet management software provider Sofico, has urged contract hire and leasing companies to keep up when it comes to the various ways fleet customers can obtain information.

‘Many are held back by high cost systems and increasingly unwieldy application landscapes, but they are in real danger of being left behind in this new mobile information race, he claimed.

Smith described the present day’s demand for information as relentless and growing following the emergence of mobile internet and telematics.

‘To fulfil that need, leasing companies require flexible, modern and fast fleet software solutions that don’t require major investment when opening them up to multi-channel use.

'We are aware of some leasing companies who are spending heavily on developing web and mobile internet based systems, when a total back-office and fully web enabled modern solution like our own Miles system is readily available for far less.

'Why sink costs into a technologically obsolete, rigid application environment with high on-going costs, low flexibility, inherent complexity and poor multi-channel support capabilities, when a modern, agile solution is already out there?'

AA DriveTech launches first hybrid and EV driver training course

AA DriveTech is introducing what it believes to be the first driver training course aimed specifically at drivers of hybrid and electric powered vehicles.

Initially the course will be offered to business drivers whose employers wish to fulfil their duty of care obligations to those who drive for business purposes.

'Clearly the market for these vehicles has some way to go before it is considered firmly established within the UK fleet market but we felt it was important that AA DriveTech was in a position to support early adopters and assist them in adapting their driving styles to both remain safe and get the best out of their vehicles,' said Paul Holmes, AA DriveTech's fleet director.

The workshop-based course, devised by the AA DriveTech Academy, lasts three and a half hours and covers:

- The obvious, and less obvious, differences between driving a conventional petrol or diesel-powered vehicle and one reliant on an electric or hybrid powertrain
- Specific techniques that allow the driver to maximise economy and stay safe
- The safe re-fuelling or re-charging of vehicles
- Journey planning in order to maximise economy and overcome range anxiety
- How other road users interact with such vehicles and the potential hazards this could create.

Further information is available at fleetsafe@AAdrivetech.com or by calling The Sales Hotline on 01256 495732.

Autohorn Fleet Services goes hybrid with Toyotas

SIXTY Toyota Auris Hybrid hatchbacks have joined the fleet of York's largest car hire specialist to offer its customers an ultra-low-emissions option for the first time.

Autohorn Fleet Services has been in business as a car and van rental, short-term leasing and contract hire company for more than 15 years, and holds National, Alamo and Europcar franchises. Seventy per cent of its business, around 200,000 days of hire a year, is corporate.

The company operates a mixed fleet of 600 vehicles, but had only ever used a small number of Toyotas in the past.

Now not only have the Auris Hybrids joined the fleet but Autohorn has also ordered 50 Toyota Aygo ICE 1.0 litre hatchbacks as city runabouts.

'Ordering the hybrids was very much a conscious decision to enable us to offer our customers a genuinely environmentally friendly vehicle, either for short or longer-term hire,' said Autohorn's head of sales Neil O'Connor.

‘We decided on Toyota on the basis of price, service and the car itself, how it looks and its specification. High levels of equipment are important because we separate ourselves from our competitors by offering higher-end vehicles for no extra cost whatsoever. We knew we wanted a high spec petrol-electric hybrid.

‘We have larger corporate and Government-funded customers who are committed to reducing their carbon footprint, and ask us to supply the greenest vehicles we have.’

Model update

BMW to bring hybrid power to the UK in 2012

BMW hybrid power is coming to the UK in February next year with the launch of the £46,860 on-the-road ActiveHybrid 5, a petrol-electric saloon based on the 5 Series.

The BMW ActiveHybrid 5 delivers similar performance to a 535i, but with 16% lower fuel consumption (44.1 mpg on the combined cycle) and emissions (149 g/km). As a result, the 340 bhp model sits six bands lower in the benefit-in-kind company car tax scale.

The drivetrain of the BMW ActiveHybrid 5 combines the 306 bhp 3.0 litre TwinPower Turbo petrol engine of the 535i with a 54 bhp electric motor and an eight-speed automatic gearbox. It is the first time an in-line six-cylinder engine has been part of a BMW ActiveHybrid system.

At speeds of up to 37 mph the BMW ActiveHybrid 5 can travel up to 2.4 miles on electric power supplied by the high-performance lithium-ion battery stored in the boot, between the wheel housings. The electric motor, also integrated into the gearbox housing for the best packaging efficiency, delivers a maximum 210Nm of torque from rest.

The ActiveHybrid 5 features precise and intelligent energy management for maximum fuel efficiency. It has as standard BMW Professional Multimedia satellite navigation system, which can read the road ahead and prepare the car’s powertrain and electrical systems to respond in the most efficient way. For example, if it detects a hilly stretch ahead, it stores energy in the battery so that the electric motor is ready to assist the engine, already knowing this will be recouped later in the journey.

When accelerating, the electric motor assists the petrol engine by providing an additional boost. This results in acceleration to equal that of a 535i: zero to 62 mph in 5.9 seconds, and a limited top speed of 155 mph.

Standard equipment on the ActiveHybrid 5 includes an eight-speed automatic transmission, four-zone climate control with Stationary cooling, 17-inch alloy wheels, black panel display and high-gloss Fineline Anthracite wood interior trim.

The car is distinguished by bespoke touches which highlight its identity. It has ‘ActiveHybrid 5’ script on the C-pillars, the BMW double-kidney grille with chrome slats, the door sill strips and on an aluminium plate on the centre console. Matt chrome tailpipes, a bespoke engine cover and ‘ActiveHybrid Power Unit’ inscription on the battery housing in the boot are other visible identifiers.

Sky’s the limit for Mazda with green fleet revolution

MAZDA’S all-new CX-5 is the first new model to feature the manufacturer’s breakthrough SKYACTIV Technology that will deliver major fuel savings and emission reductions for fleets.

As a result, the Mazda CX-5, which made its world premiere at the Frankfurt International Motor Show, promises, says the manufacturer, major wholelife cost savings for fleet operators and significant financial benefits for company car drivers over rival models.

The Mazda CX-5, which will go on UK sale in 2012, is powered by a range of new low-emission, fuel-sipping petrol and diesel engines. Therefore, with fleet and personal budgets continuing to be under the microscope in a challenging economic climate, the CX-5 will deliver financial benefits.

For fleet decision-makers and company car drivers the benefits will be reflected in lower vehicle operating costs, reduced fuel bills and savings in vehicle-related taxes; including capital allowances, Vehicle Excise Duty, Class 1A National Insurance contributions for businesses and benefit-in-kind tax for drivers.

The engine line-up will include Mazda’s 165 PS SKYACTIV-G 2.0 petrol engine and SKYACTIV-D 2.2 diesel engine, which will be available in 150 PS and 175 PS versions.

Mazda’s engineers targeted emissions of less than 120 g/km for the 2WD SKYACTIV-D 2.2 Mazda CX-5. The 150 PS derivative has an emissions figure of 119 g/km and combined cycle fuel economy of 62.8 mpg. Meanwhile, the SKYACTIV-G 2.0 petrol engine has an emissions figure of 139 g/km and combined cycle fuel economy of 47.1mpg.

The Mazda CX-5 features the full range of SKYACTIV Technology including improved aerodynamics, vehicle weight reduction, chassis developments and new manual and automatic transmissions matched to the new engines.

By 2015 Mazda is planning to deliver a 30% improvement on the 2008 average fuel economy of vehicles and a 23% improvement in emissions.

Crucially, says Mazda, SKYACTIV Technology addresses the seemingly conflicting goals of driving pleasure and environmental and safety performance without compromise, with a significant role being played by progressive further refinement of petrol and diesel engine technology.

While Mazda continues to work behind the scenes on technological alternatives to the internal combustion engine, Mazda fleet and remarketing director Steve Jelliss said: ‘SKYACTIV Technology will open new corporate opportunities for Mazda.’

‘Lowest benefit-in-kind tax in class’ for new Hyundai saloon

HYUNDAI’S all-new i40 saloon will cost from £17,395 on-the-road when it goes on UK sale on January 5 next year.

The saloon joins the already on sale i40 Tourer, and Hyundai believes that with the lowest benefit-in-kind tax cost in class for key diesel derivatives, the range will become an ‘attractive alternative’ for company car drivers.

The saloon will be available in the same three main trim levels as the i40 Tourer -Active, Style and Premium - with the choice of two engines, three power outputs and manual or automatic transmission.

Hyundai’s Blue Drive technologies - incorporating Intelligent Stop & Go technology - are fitted as standard on all Active derivatives, and on the Style 1.7 CRDi 136 PS Blue Drive and the Premium 1.7 CRDi 136 PS Blue Drive model ensuring emissions of 119 g/km.

Standard features include: 16-inch alloy wheels, Bluetooth connectivity with voice recognition, leather steering wheel with audio controls, electric heated door mirrors with integrated LED indicators, electric front and rear windows and electric parking brake with automatic hold function.

Touch screen satellite navigation with rear view camera, front and rear parking sensors, cruise control and dual zone climate control are standard on the mid-point Style range.

The Premium models benefit further from the addition of leather upholstery, panoramic sunroof, keyless entry and supervision instrument cluster with LCD colour display as standard, plus the option of the lane departure warning and smart parking assist, heated leather steering wheel and ventilated front seats.

Safety features include: ESP, ABS, hill-start assist control to prevent roll-back when starting on an incline, VSM (Vehicle Stability Management), Brake Assist System and Emergency Stop Signal as well as seven airbags.

The entry-level 1.6 GDi Blue Drive costs £17,395 and the 10-strong range tops out at £24,895 for the 1.7 CRDi 136 PS auto.

Honda reveals prices and spec for new Civic

PRICES for the new Honda Civic will range from £16,495 on-the-road for the entry-level 1.4 litre 100PS i-VTEC SE to £26,595 for the top of the range 2.2 i-DTEC EX GT.

The car will also be available in the familiar SE, ES, EX and EX GT trim levels and with a choice of three engines - 1.4 and 1.8 i-VTEC petrol and 2.2 i-DTEC diesel.

Every Civic gets ECON driving mode - as seen on the Jazz Hybrid and Insight - and Idle Stop (only on manual variants) to help drivers save fuel and drive down running costs

Order books at Honda dealerships for the Swindon-built car are now open with cars arriving in dealerships during January.

Standard equipment new to the Civic includes, Honda’s Intelligent Multi-Information Display (i-MID) five-inch dashboard screen which displays relevant driving details such as mpg, the idle stop status and climate and audio settings. Other new additions include a rear wiper, daytime running lights and a headlight-off timer that maintains illumination for 15 seconds after the car is locked.

Citroën extends C4 range with new Aircross

CITROËN is extending its C4 range with the introduction of the Aircross SUV, which promises the grip of an off-roader with the ride and driveability of a saloon.

Ecologically considerate, the model also, says the manufacturer, boasts some of the lowest emissions in its segment.

Available with two and four-wheel drive versions in some markets, the Citroën C4 Aircross will be launched in Europe at the end of the first half of 2012. The car will go on sale in the UK during the second half of next year.

The engine line-up will include a 1.6i 115 bhp petrol engine and HDI 110 bhp and 150 bhp diesel engines. The 110 bhp unit mated to a six-speed manual gearbox is, says the company, one of the front-runners in its segment for low emissions.

The five-seat Aircross is 4.34m long, 1.80m wide, 1.63m high and has a 442-litre boot.

New Chrysler supermini enters UK showrooms

THE new Ypsilon, introduced by Chrysler into the UK supermini sector this month,
marks, says the manufacturer, a resurgence for Chrysler Group which was formed in 2009 as a strategic alliance with Fiat.

Now with the help of Fiat's experience and knowledge in the small and medium-sized car sectors, Chrysler says it can imbue compact, more environmentally friendly models with the luxurious character traits of its bigger cars.

Chrysler brand director Nigel Land said: 'Through the launch of Ypsilon and Delta (see next story) we now have a range that encompasses both the small and medium passenger car markets with vehicles that are notably well designed, ensuring that they really are credible alternatives to the mainstream. They are equipped with all the features you would expect from a large Chrysler, integrated with stylish European designed interiors.'

For the first time in the sector, motorists will have access to a raft of large car features such as Magic Parking, xenon headlights, Blue&Me-TomTom LIVE and the Smart Fuel System.

On top of that, depending on the trim level they choose, buyers will be able to specify automatic climate control, fog lights, 16-inch wheels, cruise control, a leather steering wheel with audio controls, dusk and rain sensors, parking sensors and a 500-watt surround sound music system.

The Ypsilon is powered by Fiat's 2011 International Engine of the Year, the TwinAir. 0.9 litre petrol turbo, a 1.2 litre petrol and a 1.3 litre turbo diesel, all of which come with Start&Stop as standard. There are three trim levels at launch: S, SE and Limited.

Standard equipment on the five-door model includes: height adjustable steering wheel, electric front windows, 50/50 split rear seat, height-adjustable driver's seat, 15-inch wheels, premium fabric upholstery and heated rear window and radio with CD and MP3 player.

On-the-road prices start at £10,695 for the 1.2 S and extend to £15,695 for the 900cc TwinAir auto Limited.

New Chrysler Delta goes on sale

CHRYSLER'S new lower medium sector Delta car has gone on sale in the UK with on-the-road prices starting at £16,695 for the 1.4T-Jet 120 S and rising to £25,695 for the 2.0M-Jet 165 Limited.

The car offers family saloon space in a compact hatchback body and, says Chrysler, introduces executive car equipment to a wide market.

With its range of four engine options, the Delta marks a re-entry into the C segment for Chrysler.

Chrysler brand director Nigel Land said: 'We are not going for high volumes. We want to be the choice for people who are seeking a credible alternative to traditional segment offerings.

'The Delta will bring D-segment standards of space and quality to the C-segment. This is just the start of our journey as we re-launch the Chrysler brand in the UK. We are now starting to sell cars that are relevant to a more mainstream market. They'll have all the quality features you would expect from a large Chrysler, integrated into very stylish European designed interiors.'

The Delta's rear seat slides for maximum versatility and when it's in its rear position there is a class-leading 1010mm of leg room in the back. Passengers can recline the seat back up to 25 degrees for extra comfort.

A host of 'large car' technologies available, include Magic Parking, lane departure control and Blue&Me.

There are four trim levels: S, SE, SR and Limited and the engine range embraces a 120 bhp petrol 1.4 litre TurboJet, a more powerful 140 bhp 1.4 litre that uses Fiat's ground-breaking MultiAir technology and 1.6 litre and 2.0 litre capacities MultiJet diesel engines. All models feature six-speed gearboxes with a semi-automatic version available on the 1.6 SE MultiJet.

Standard equipment across the range includes: radio/CD with MP3 compatibility, front foglamps with cornering function, remote keyless entry, manual air-conditioning and power windows front and rear. Safety features include Daytime Running Lights (DRL), six airbags, three-point safety belts for all five seats, ABS anti-lock braking with Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD), Electronic Stability Control (ESC), Hill Holder and Anti Slip Regulation traction control.

SEAT unveils new city car with laser treatment

SEAT's all-new city car, the Mii, will go on sale in the UK in spring 2012 with the 'green' Ecomotive model having a carbon dioxide emissions figure of 97 g/km and the range being available with City Safety Assist with laser sensor.

The new SEAT will be offered with all-new 1.0 litre petrol engines of 60 PS and 75 PS outputs and with a volume of 251 litres, the Mii offers the largest luggage compartment in its class. With the rear seat back folded, that increases to 951 litres.

Claimed to be 'a unique innovation' in the city class, the Mii's City Safety Assist, in the event of danger, warns its driver, or brakes automatically.

A laser sensor recognises other vehicles in front, whether they are driving or stationary. The system warns the driver when there is the imminent threat of an accident at speeds of less than 18 mph. If the driver does not react, the Mii brakes automatically.

SsangYong Korando launches with five-year limitless mileage cover

SSANGYONG Motor has launched its new Korando in the UK with a limitless mileage five-year warranty.

All the major mechanical components on the car are covered including wheel bearings, suspension joints and bushes, steering joints, shock absorbers and even the audio system. Wearable components such as clutch discs and brake friction materials which could have their life reduced by poor driving are covered for one year or 12,000 miles, and the battery and paintwork for three years.

The warranty applies to the car not the purchaser, so providing the service record is maintained it can be transferred no matter how many times the vehicle is sold within that five-year period.

'We believe that the Korando's low purchase price from just £16,995, great build quality, high specification and now a watertight warranty will be a compelling combination that anyone looking to purchase a new crossover will find difficult to ignore. We have complete confidence in this new product and believe this warranty demonstrates that clearly to our customers,' said UK chief Paul Williams.

The Korando is powered by a 175 PS Euro5 2.0 litre diesel engine with emissions of 157 g/km. There will be five models from launch, with the option of six-speed manual, six-speed automatic and a choice of trim levels - S, ES and EX.

The five-year limitless warranty will also apply to the 2012 specification SsangYong Rexton off roader and Rodius MPV.

Volkswagen gives Golf models the leather look

VOLKSWAGEN is boosting its Golf line-up, with customers ordering a GT, GTI, GTD or R model from Tuesday (October 4, 2011) gaining leather upholstery as standard.

On top of that, Volkswagen is adding Bluetooth phone preparation to the cars, meaning customers benefit from over £2,000-worth of extra value, says the manufacturer.

Black ‘Vienna’ leather upholstery was previously a £1,890 option. The driver’s seat comes with electrical adjustment, while both passenger and driver get electrically operated lumbar support and heated seats.

The GT, GTI and GTD all feature sports seats with bolsters, while the sports seats in the Golf R have deeper bolsters.

Bluetooth phone preparation (previously a £255 option) integrates compatible mobile telephones with the Golf’s in-car entertainment system, allowing users to access many of their phone’s features using buttons on the radio or via the standard leather-trimmed multifunction steering wheel.

The upgrade is offered for £140 on GT models, and at no extra cost on GTD, GTI and R, meaning GT prices now start at £21,310, GTD at £24,635, GTI at £25,305 and R at £31,420.

Facelifted Kia Soul enters showrooms

KIA’S urban crossover, the Soul, has been refreshed from top to bottom for the 2012 model year and went on sale this week with on-the-road prices starting at £12,495.

The car features new or revised 1.6 litre engines and the introduction of a six-speed gearbox on all models designed to improve performance while lowering fuel consumption, emissions and running costs.

Inside there are revisions to the fascia, console and trim and all versions have more equipment.

Externally, the five-door, five-seat front-wheel-drive model sees changes to the bumper, grilles, lights, front bodywork and wheels.

The revised model offers a choice of two regular trim grades, badged Soul 1 and Soul 2, and two ‘Soul Originals’, the Hunter and Quantum. ‘Soul Originals’ is a rolling programme of special versions with unique styling and trim, changed at regular intervals.

Soul is powered by two 1.6 litre engines - a new direct-injection (GDi) petrol unit developing 138 bhp - up 14 bhp on the previous 1.6 litre - and a modified 126 bhp turbodiesel (CRDi). A six-speed manual gearbox replaces the five-speed unit previously used, while the CRDi engine is optionally available with a six-speed automatic in place of the former four-speed transmission.

The diesel manual is now 0.6 seconds quicker from rest to 60 mph (10.3 seconds), while more than 3 mpg more fuel-efficient (57.6 mpg). That is sufficient to bring its emissions down by 8 g/km to 129 g/km.

The new petrol engine and six-speed gearbox combination, can accelerate from standstill to 62 mph in 10 seconds, while its official combined-cycle economy is 44.1 mpg. Emissions are 149 g/km.

For 2012 existing safety features have been supplemented by Vehicle Stability Management (VSM) and Hill-start Assist Control (HAC).

Standard specification includes air conditioning, all-round electric windows, remote central locking and six airbags fitted to every model.

On-the-road prices for the 11-model line-up start at £12,295 for the 1.6 GDi and extend to £17,795 for the 1.6 CRDi Quantum auto.

- KIA has launched a new top-of-the-range version of its cee’d and cee’d SW models. Priced from £19,195 on-the-road the ‘4’ version is available with increased power output. Both models share the 1.6 litre CRDi turbodiesel engine that produces 126 bhp at 4,000 rpm - up from 113 bhp on other trim versions - and 188 lb/ft torque (255 Nm) from 1,900 to 2,750 rpm. A six-speed manual transmission is standard and a four-speed automatic transmission is available as an option on the cee’d SW ‘4’. Emissions for the cee’d ‘4’ are 119 g/km, whilst the combined-cycle fuel consumption figure is 62.8 mpg. A more sporting exterior appearance has been achieved with a set of 17-inch alloy wheels, black bezel headlights and rear window privacy glass. Internally the models feature full black leather upholstery, combined with front heated seats, and a leather trimmed steering wheel and gear-knob as well as cruise control, with steering wheel mounted controls, and electrically-operated heated and folding door mirrors. The cee'd '4' and cee'd SW '4' are available to order now and priced at £19,195 and £20,345 respectively on-the-road. The automatic gearbox option on the cee'd SW is priced at £1,100 whilst the sporty-looking pro_cee'd '4' is also available at £18,995 on-the-road.

EU officials to drive Hyundai fuel cell car

THE Hyundai ix35 fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV) has been selected by the European Commission-backed Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking (FCH JU) to be used as a demonstration vehicle to test and promote hydrogen fuel cell technology in a real-world environment.

The car will be made available for MEPs, Commissioners, European Union officials and other policymakers to test drive until March 2012.

The decision moves Hyundai a step closer to the commercialisation of hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles by 2015. It means that around 30 FCEVs are on trial around the world.

Debuted at the Geneva Motor Show in 2010, the ix35 features innovations over previous-generation Hyundai FCEVs, including a 55% improvement in driving range and an 80% reduction in manufacturing costs.

Maria da Graça Carvalho MEP, member of the Industry Committee, said: 'Fuel cell vehicles, such as the ix35 FCEV, have great potential to help fight carbon dioxide emissions, reduce our dependence on hydrocarbons and contribute to economic growth. I am sure my fellow members of the European Parliament will embrace the opportunity to test the viability of hydrogen technology.'

Manufacturer news

Saab sells Spyker sports car subsidiary for $44m

CASH-starved Swedish Automobile, the parent company of Saab, has sold its Spyker luxury sports car subsidiary to a United States-based private equity firm for about $44 million.

The new owner, North Street Capital, is the private equity firm of racing car enthusiast Alex Mascioli.

Swedish Automobile has struggled for months to stave off bankruptcy, seeking new investors and selling off various assets so that it could pay suppliers and employees and resume production at its Saab plant in Sweden.

Last month, Saab won a reprieve when a Swedish court granted it protection from creditors while it waits for funding from Chinese investors.

Niche sportscar maker Spyker was one of several assets put up for sale by Amsterdam-listed parent Swedish Automobile.

The Spyker deal is expected to be completed within a month then North Street Capital plans to focus on raising awareness of the Spyker brand.

Mascioli says Spyker operations will remain unchanged and Victor Muller, head of Swedish Automobile and also the founder of Spyker, will remain the CEO and deal with the day-to-day operations. North Street Capital says it will provide resources for the company in order for it to increase its operations.

Drivers 'get a grip' with Toyota's winter tyre programme

TOYOTA and its premium arm Lexus have become the latest motor manufacturers to announce winter tyre programmes.

The manufacturers say that they secured a supply of thousands of winter tyres earlier this year suitable for most current and many past Toyota and Lexus models.

Toyota dealers will supply 'competitively priced' tyres and carry out the change-over for owners who can also store their standard set with the centre until the spring.

Tyres have been provided by Yokohama and supplied by Stapletons.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders says that winter tyres should be not be viewed as a cost, but an investment.

According to the British Tyre Manufacturers' Association, a car fitted with winter tyres, braking from 62 mph on a cold, wet road, will outbreak a summer tyre by around five metres. On snow at 30 mph the difference is 11 metres, while the same vehicle breaking on an icy road at just 20 mph would pull-up eight metres shorter - a crucial two car lengths less than a vehicle using summer tyres.

'Tyres can have a major effect on a car's performance, improving its safety and keeping it moving in winter conditions,' said Paul Everitt, SMMT chief executive. 'Winter tyres provide greater grip and handling, reducing braking distances in cold, wet conditions as well as on snow and ice. With temperatures starting to drop and the wetter seasons approaching, motorists should make sure they have the best tyres for the road and climate conditions.'

By swapping from summer to winter rubber for half the year, both sets will wear half as much, lasting twice as long as a single set of tyres, says the SMMT.

Residual value update

Shortage of 'young' used cars could send prices soaring

THE post-recession decline in new car sales coupled with the lack of supply into the used car market of high quality two-five year old cars could push up average second hand prices, according to BCA's *'2011 Used Car Market Report'*.

The report shows that in 2010 used car volumes rose to 6.8 million and the overall market value increased to a record breaking £35 billion as the used car market continued to lead the recovery in the motor industry. An additional 270,000 used cars were sold compared to 2009, generating an extra £800 million in value.

The average used car selling price slipped year-on-year, however, from £5,422 in 2009 to £5,332 in 2010, reflecting the changing mix of the used car supply in the UK.

Stronger sales of cars in the six-eight year age group in 2010 helped used car market volumes rise by 4.3% (270,000 units) last year as sales of younger used cars faltered.

BCA data also shows that the average mileage of used cars when sold has been rising over time and reached nearly 59,000 in the first half of this year, another market highpoint.

Looking ahead, the report suggests that a lack of supply of good quality two-five year old used cars is a significant concern for the UK motor industry.

With fewer new cars being sold since the economic crash of 2008, the available supply of used cars is getting relatively older and at a higher mileage. This, says BCA, will create more competition and expense for dealers to source younger, retail quality used cars and could result in prices rising for motorists when they next change their car.

Since the 2008 economic crash, around 500,000 fewer new cars are sold every year and industry forecasts suggest this pattern is unlikely to change before 2012. As the report points out, more than two million new car sales cannot be removed from the used car supply chain without creating waves in the marketplace.

While the number of cars in the UK (the car parc) will remain around 30 million units for the foreseeable future, the parc is ageing rapidly and 'younger' used cars will become an increasingly scarce commodity, predicts the report.

'The simple fact is the UK car parc is getting older, as fewer new cars are sold and both motorists and businesses have held onto their vehicles for longer,' said Tony Gannon, BCA's communications director, BCA.

'The average age of cars on UK roads rose in 2010 to 7.25 years, which is a 14-year high. The trend for older cars is rising and we believe this could continue for several years to come.'

The report highlights a wide-range of used car buying trends including the fact that petrol power remains preferable for most buyers when considering their next car. As the report suggests, that could be at odds with the supply of used cars from company fleets and businesses which often run larger, well-specified diesel-powered models.

Gannon concluded: 'The next 12-18 months are going to be a very challenging period for the UK motor industry. The potential supply shortage of younger used cars over the next few years may create upward pressure on used vehicle prices, while economic pressures may lead to reduced demand which will push prices downwards. Which of those two levers will be the stronger remains to be seen.'

Used car values rise after five months of decline, says Manheim

FIVE months of declining used car values have come to an end with an average 5.4% (£353) increase to £6,912 recorded in September by Manheim Remarketing.

The company's latest market analysis for cars reports that last month saw the first increase since April. Overall values in the fleet sector were up 3.5% (£209) to £6,154, dealer part exchange values were up 3.5% (£77) to £2,289 while manufacturer stock values increased by 7.8% (£890) to £12,276 due in part to a decrease in average age and mileage.

Notable increases in average values for the fleet sector in September included small hatchbacks up 4.5% (£192) to £4,503, medium family up 2% (£112) to £5,570, large family up 4.4% (£206) to £4,901 and 4x4s up 2.1% (£242) to £11,666.

Examples of decreases in average values included Mini MPVs in the fleet sector down 5.4% (£255) to £4,461.

During the month average mileage of fleet cars sold reduced to 59,368 (August: 61,182).

Mike Pilkington, managing director, Manheim Remarketing, said: 'With supply of quality used stock into the wholesale market shorter than expected in September the month has been characterised by dealers desperately hunting for quality vehicles.

'Although prices and conversion rates inevitably cooled towards the end of the month the good weather has perhaps given the market a more optimistic outlook for the harsher trading months ahead.'

Used LCV market facing a ‘black hole’ in supply

THE used LCV market is facing a potential ‘black hole’ in supply in the years ahead, according to the *‘2011 Used Car Market Report’* published by BCA and written by Professor Peter Cooke, University of Buckingham

With annual LCV registrations falling sharply from the record 338,000 units sold in 2007, Cooke estimates around 275,000 LCVs will effectively be ‘missing’ from the used vehicle supply line between 2011 and 2015, a reflection of the reduced new van volumes registered from 2009 onwards.

In addition, many professional volume LCV operators have kept vehicles in service longer, meaning vans are coming to market both older and at a higher mileage.

Cooke suggests this could have a direct effect on small businesses, partnerships and sole traders, who are the biggest buyers of used LCVs as well as the wholesale and retail van trade who could find it increasingly difficult to source good quality used LCV stock.

He said: ‘In simple terms, if we assume the national demand for used LCVs will be in the region of 300,000 annually, as the economy improves, there will be a shortfall of some 275,000 first-time used LCVs entering the market between late 2011 and 2015.’

The report also suggests the average age of LCVs on UK roads will rise as fewer new vans have been sold to ‘freshen the mix’, and the van parc will remain static at around 3.5 million units for the next few years.

Cooke suggests there are a number of issues for market watchers to consider. He said ‘Retailers need to examine their used LCV sources and the volumes that are available going forward - potentially they may need to develop new sources of used LCVs in the short/medium term to protect supply. If dealers are unable to source the type of units they have traditionally handled, it may be necessary to work with older vehicles.

‘As SME demand for used LCVs rises, the growing shortage of younger used LCVs will become more apparent, with the likelihood that demand will exceed supply considerably.’

Motorauctions Leeds goes into administration

ADMINISTRATORS are searching for a buyer of Motorauctions Leeds following the company’s collapse towards the end of last month.

Begbies Traynor has been appointed administrators for the auction house, which was established in 1986.

A statement from the administrators said: ‘The directors of the company called in administrators Begbies Traynor following the loss of a number of commercial contracts. All 25 full time and part time staff employed at the premises in Hillidge Road [have been] made redundant.’

Motorauctions Leeds is understood to have debts ‘in the high six figures’, according to the *Yorkshire Post* (September 30).

A spokeswoman for Begbies Traynor told the paper that no buyer had been found for the business but there had been ‘substantial interest in Motorauctions Leeds’ premises close to the M621. That site was now likely to be sold separately from the auction business.

Politics and regulation

Ministers to get UK in fast lane with 80 mph motorway speed limit

BRITAIN'S motorway speed limit could increase from 70 mph to 80 mph in early 2013 under Government proposals to get the country moving.

The Department for Transport is to launch a consultation later this year on increasing the 70 mph speed limit, which has been in place since 1965.

Transport Secretary Philip Hammond says the current limit is out of date as a result of advances in safety and motoring technology.

The Department for Transport says that technological advances mean that cars are significantly safer then they were - contributing to a fall of more than 75% in the number of people killed on British roads since 1965. That is why, says Hammond, that it is now time to look again at whether the speed limit set almost 50 years ago is still appropriate.

The Department for Transport says as many as 49% of drivers flout the current 70 mph limit, however opponents of the rise say that increasing the limit to 80 mph will mean a de facto speed limit of 90 mph and that road crash casualties could increase.

Hammond believes that Britain's roads 'should be the arteries of a healthy economy'. He said: 'While we must ensure that our roads remain among the safest in the world, we must also consider the huge economic benefits that can be created by shortening journey times.

'Increasing the speed limit on motorways from 70 to 80 mph for cars, light vans and motorcycles could provide hundreds of millions of pounds of benefits for the economy and I will put forward formal proposals for making these changes later this year.'

There are no plans to increase speed limits on motorways that apply to lorries. The Department also says that it is also considering the case related to increasing the speed limit on other high standard, near-motorway dual carriageways. Changes would be implemented case by case with no plans to consult about raising the default national speed limit of 70 mph for all purpose dual carriageways.

Professor Stephen Glaister, director of the RAC Foundation, said: 'There are good reasons for making 80 the new 70, and good reasons not to. Drivers travelling that 10 mph quicker might reach their destination sooner, but are likely to use about 20% more fuel and emit 20% more CO_2. There is also likely to be a slight increase in road casualties. And what about enforcement? If police follow existing guidelines, many people could do 90 mph before action is taken.

'Before you change a speed limit, you have to know whether you are doing it for safety, economic or environmental reasons. Unfortunately not all of these are compatible.'

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of the Campaign for Better Transport, said: 'Increasing the motorway speed limit to 80 mph would not help the economy and would increase costs for drivers. It would also add to pollution and increase road casualties. Responsible motorists know that driving steadily at or below 70 mph is most fuel efficient, reduces jams and is safer.'

‘Opinion surveys show that the public will only support increases if they come with full enforcement, which is not possible in the current economic climate without a massive increase in the number of speed cameras on our motorways. This is an empty gesture that would not benefit anyone.’

Mary Williams, chief executive of road safety charity Brake, called the speed limit increase idea ‘selfish’. She added: ‘The tragedies on Britain’s motorways, often in treacherous weather conditions and due to all sorts of causes, ranging from driver fatigue, to vehicle technical problems, to dangerous driving, are real and inevitable and more inevitable the faster the speeds. Higher speeds equal less time to react and avoid a collision in an emergency.’

She called on the Government to scrap the consultation and instead invest in a review of the safety of the UK’s entire trunk network, including the adequacy of all crash barriers, frequency of rest stops, and hard shoulders, and to invest in methods to prevent driver fatigue on long distance trunk roads, a major cause of weaving traffic, that, at speed, can cause carnage.

Government urged to take action to cut £32bn cost of road crashes

THE Government should reverse its dramatic cuts in road safety investment in a bid to halt the estimated £32 billion cost to the economy of road crashes.

The call came from road safety organisations as the Department for Transport published its *‘Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2010 Annual Report’*.

It confirms preliminary statistics published earlier this year that deaths and injuries on the UK’s roads have fallen to record lows. Last year 1,850 people were killed on the roads (2009: 2,222), 22,660 people were seriously injured (2009: 24,690) and 184,138 people were slightly injured (2009: 195,234).

The report reveals that the total value of prevention of reported road accidents in 2010 was estimated to be £14.9 billion. However, allowing for accidents not reported to the police could increase the total value of prevention of road accidents to around £32bn as an upper limit, suggests the report.

The Institute of Advanced Motorists welcomed the ‘significant drop in road deaths and injuries’ on the roads. The report attributed the drop in deaths and serious injuries to improved vehicle safety and road safety engineering, as well as the economic downturn, with falling traffic levels for the past three years and a continued reduction in free flow speeds.

However, a poll of 2,700 people by the IAM reveals that the public have little faith that the numbers will continue to fall due to spending cuts with fewer police officers enforcing traffic laws, road conditions and potholes worsening, less investment in road safety education and fewer road safety officers. Additionally, there are concerns that with personal and business budgets under pressure there will be more unroadworthy cars on the road.

IAM chief executive Simon Best said: ‘The value of preventing each fatal crash on UK roads is around £1.8 million, and approximately £200,000 for each serious injury - it’s clear that effective road safety initiatives not only save lives but also save the nation money.

‘The Government should think about the real value of road safety initiatives when it considers its expenditure plans.’

Meanwhile, road safety charity Brake is calling on the Government to reverse dramatic cuts in road safety investment and implement challenging targets for tackling what it calls ‘needless deaths and injuries’ on the roads.

Despite the dramatic falls in road casualties revealed in the report, road crashes remain a huge economic drain, and major cause of suffering, with five more families being bereaved every day, says the charity.

Julie Townsend, Brake campaigns director, said: ‘Road deaths and serious injuries are preventable, and as such we must work in the long term towards eliminating them.

‘Brake is desperately worried that this trend of falling casualties is under threat, and in coming years we could see more lives destroyed as a result of cuts to road safety work and a lack of decisive action from the Government on key issues, such as young drivers, speed and drink-driving. Cuts to road safety work are a false economy because deaths and serious injuries exert a huge financial burden on our fragile economy.’

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, said: ‘If all the reported road accidents in 2010 had been prevented, this would have saved almost £15bn - crucial given the current economic climate.

‘During the last three years we have had unusually large drops in the number of deaths and serious injuries on our roads. This very welcome result is due to the focus we have had on road safety, but also to some external factors such as the economic downturn, falling traffic levels and heavy snowfalls over the last two winters. We need to consider how we can ensure that the major reductions in death and injury do not stop or, even worse, start to increase if the economy picks up and we have milder winters.’

General motor industry news

Board overhaul at Helphire as losses mount

A BOARD room shake up has taken place at accident management company Helphire as the company continues to struggle.

The decision of chairman Richard Rose and two other non-executive directors to step down, former Conservative Party leader Michael Howard and Andrew Cripps, was announced as the company revealed increased losses for the year to June 30.

Pre-tax losses for the year under review reached £34.1 million (2010: restated -£15.6m) on revenues down to £234.8m (2010: £288.2m).

Martin Ward, group managing director, said Helphire had faced a ‘challenging year’ but the company would start to rebuild its balance sheet. However, he said that the company was ‘cautious in our outlook’.

Helphire blamed its poor performance on three major factors. Firstly, the company said that its main trading environment in vehicle credit hire had experienced a downturn due
to economic factors which, together with high fuel prices, led UK motorists to cut back on car journeys, resulting in fewer road accidents.

Additionally, hire length, a major contributor to Helphire’s profitability, declined in the 12 months, to an average of 18.7 days from an average of 21.5 days in 2010 due, said the company, to body shop capacity facilitating shorter vehicle repair times.

However, the situation was compounded by the discovery of prior years’ overstatements of insurance company receivables in Helphire’s financial reporting systems. The overstatement of claims emanated from an error in December 2008 resulting in accounting adjustments totalling £12.8m.

Rose said in Helphire’s financial statement: ‘Adjusted revenues were 18.5% lower than the restated comparable period last year, reflecting the factors referred to, along with the discontinuation of certain business contracts from 2010 and the slow start from new contracts.’

But the company is continuing to reduce debt levels and in June 2011 total net debt was £133.7m, a reduction in the year of £28.3m, culminating in a reduction of £105.8m since June 30, 2009.

Replacing Rose as executive chairman with immediate effect is Avril Palmer-Baunack. She is currently chief executive of Autologic Holdings. Prior to joining Autologic in 2007 Palmer-Baunack was chief executive of Universal Salvage. She has previously been managing director of FMG Support, a provider of fleet management services and has held management positions at Europcar UK, Northgate Motor Holdings and the Caudwell Group. Palmer-Baunack served as a non-executive director at Helphire between April 2009 and December 2010.

Budget pressures force drivers to cut fuel use by 15%

BUSINESSES and private drivers have cut their fuel consumption by more than 15% since the credit crunch and the recession as budget pressures mount.

The AA has calculated that petrol sales in the first six months of 2011 were 1.7 billion litres less than in the same period three years ago.

The AA says the drop in petrol sales is a direct result of record fuel prices with drivers cutting back on mileage as a result.

The cut in fuel purchases, comparing the first six months of this year with pre-recession levels, is equivalent to 40,000 delivery rounds by fully-laden petrol tankers.

The fall in forecourt sales, says the AA, has deprived the Treasury of nearly £1bn in fuel duty between January and June this year.

Meanwhile, BCA says the rising price of fuel is the most significant factor affecting the driving habits of UK motorists.

A survey of 4,000 motorists for the auction's giant's latest Used Car Market Report found that fuel consumption was the top priority in their next car purchase, with 27% saying they would be looking for a vehicle with better fuel consumption next time round with 17% looking for a vehicle with lower road tax.

The BCA research also asked drivers at what price point they would change their car or pattern of driving. A quarter said that a fuel price of up to £1.40 per litre would force them to change their pattern of driving, reinforcing the findings of the AA research. A further 10% said it would take a price rise of up to £1.50 per litre to change their pattern of driving.

Tony Gannon, BCA communications director, said that while top of drivers' list was buying a car with better fuel consumption demand for such vehicles could well outstrip supply, pushing up prices as a consequence.

Defective tyres contribute to more than 1,200 road casualties

DEFECTIVE and under-inflated tyres were responsible for more than 1,210 road casualties in Britain during 2010.

The Department for Transport's *'Reported Road Casualties in Great Britain: 2010 Annual Report'* also shows that 18 motorists were killed during the year from defective tyres, bringing the number of tyre-related deaths on UK roads in the last five years to 164.

'The latest figures are truly shocking and emphasise why we need ongoing action, education and awareness about tyre safety issues,' said Stuart Jackson, chairman of TyreSafe, the not-for-profit organisation dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of correct tyre maintenance and the dangers of defective and worn tyres.

‘Making sure that tyres are safe and legal is a quick and easy job, yet we still see hundreds of accidents occurring each year because drivers don’t make these essential safety checks.’

In a co-ordinated effort to educate drivers about the importance of correct tyre care, the tyre industry is running tyre safety month throughout October.

Additionally, TyreSafe has launched a range of online resources - www.tyresafe.org - showing drivers how to make a number of critical tyre safety checks, such as tread depth, tyre pressure and condition.

Current UK law requires drivers to have at least 1.6mm of tread across the central three quarters of the tread, around its entire circumference. Drivers found to be in breach of the law not only face an increased danger of being involved in an accident, but also risk fines of up to £2,500 and three penalty points for each illegal tyre.

Jackson said: ‘If all drivers took just a few minutes every month to check their tyre pressures, condition and tread depth, we could help prevent this needless injury and loss of life.’

Number of casualties by severity caused by illegal, defective or under-inflated tyres

Year	Killed	Serious injured	Slight injured	All casualties
2006	44	263	1,317	1,624
2007	46	237	1,408	1,691
2008	36	228	1,168	1,432
2009	20	196	1,168	1,384
2010	18	172	1,020	1,210

People on the move

Manheim Auctions strengthens senior management team

MANHEIM Auctions has strengthened its senior management team with the appointment of Chris Cush to the newly enhanced role of commercial director.

Cush will take overall responsibility for driving Manheim’s operational strategy and delivering day-to-day operational performance for customers.

The general managers at Bristol, Leeds and Colchester will report directly to Cush as will a newly created general manager role at Bruntingthorpe, whilst all of the remaining auction centres will report geographically to two regional directors.

Cush has more than 30 years of remarketing experience. He joined Manheim Auctions in 2002 where he has held several roles including auction centre manager at Bristol and Wimbledon, later becoming regional manager south before becoming general manager at Colchester, where he oversaw the development of the centre into Europe’s only four lane auction centre. More recently he has been commercial director south from December 2010 until his current appointment.

Changes at the top at HR Owen

ANDY Duncan, chief executive of luxury motor retailer H.R. Owen is leaving after just 12 months to become chief executive of Camelot UK Lotteries, which runs the National Lottery.

However, he will remain with the business until the end of October during which time he will effect a handover to his successor.

That man is Joe Doyle, who has joined the company with immediate effect. He has extensive experience in the automotive sector, most recently as regional managing director of HPI and Audatex. Prior to that he worked in a range of sales and marketing positions in the automotive sector.

In making the announcement, the company said that, as expected, market conditions had deteriorated in the context of the current economic turbulence. However overall trading remained in line with budget with the business ‘confident of achieving full year market expectations’.

New MD for Lombard Vehicle Management

LOMBARD Vehicle Management has confirmed that Simon Recaldin is the company’s managing director in succession to Stuart Houlston, who had run the Royal Bank of Scotland subsidiary since January 2009.

Houlston is now director of change delivery (interim) at RBS corporate banking, after moving earlier this year from the organisation, which was subject to takeover speculation a few months ago.

Recaldin is said to have ‘extensive experience of Lombard and Lombard Vehicle Management, having spent the past 20 years of his career in a number of different senior roles across the business’.

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