



Fleet control

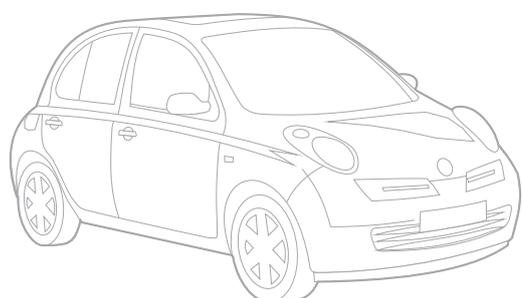
Towards a low-carbon city



Organisation	Sector	Number of vehicles	Vehicle type
Birmingham City Council	Europe's largest metropolitan authority	963	Cars, vans, mini-buses, refuse collection vehicles and road sweepers.

The challenge – to support carbon and cost reduction in Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council is leading a low-carbon revolution to reduce the city's carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2027. The council is working with the Energy Saving Trust to transform its own fleet. It has already halved the number of grey fleet miles (those driven by council employees in their own cars for business) from nine million miles in 2009 to 4.5 million miles in 2013, cutting carbon and reducing annual costs by around £2.5 million. And that's just the first small step on a transformational journey.



First step

When the Energy Saving Trust undertook its first review of Birmingham City Council's fleet in 2011 it identified considerable challenges. With no centralised fleet management system or electronic data repository, it was hard for the council to understand exactly how its fleet was being used. Energy Saving Trust recommended a complete rationalisation, centralised management and electronic data capture, and the gradual replacement of old high-polluting vehicles with new low-carbon alternatives.

These major changes would take time to achieve. So, while early steps were made in that direction, the Energy Saving Trust identified a specific area where a significant change could be introduced quickly. The Energy Saving Trust's report highlighted that the business mileage Birmingham City Council employees undertook using their own vehicles was more than nine million miles a year.

The council took action to promote carbon-friendly alternatives to the car. It encouraged use of the city's public transport system, introduced video conferencing facilities and instructed individuals to use hire cars for longer journeys. When the Energy Saving Trust returned to review the fleet in late 2013, the number of business miles driven in employees' own vehicles was down to 4.5 million a year and costs were down from £4.6 to £2.1 million.

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Big step

Even more significantly, a Green Fleet Strategy Group was established to provide a more co-ordinated approach to address the Energy Saving Trust's recommendations. Through the Climate Change and Environment Team, a dedicated post of Green Fleet Change Manager was funded. This was significant. For the first time, one individual would have oversight of the whole fleet. Until that point, every department or division had been responsible for its own vehicles. There was no overall plan for managing cost efficiencies or replacement schedules. As a result, inefficiency in fleet use and optimisation were identified as key issues. Energy Saving Trust provided valuable support to help Birmingham City Council to consolidate and analyse electronic fleet data to provide an accurate picture of fleet use. This created an evidence base for change and a benchmark against which progress can be measured.

The Green Fleet Manager also works with all of the council's departments to win support for change. Energy Saving Trust has already helped to provide a quick win for Birmingham City Council's grey fleet and now is also working alongside the council to secure the big win: to transform the council's own fleet to include more 'green' vehicles. The Green Fleet Strategy Group is looking to develop replacement strategies that will introduce increasingly carbon-friendly vehicles to the fleet over the next few years. Trials of electric and LPG vehicles are being set up within a number of council services across the city, and improved carbon performance is now a key factor in every vehicle purchasing decision.

Results summary

- ✔ Grey fleet miles have been halved from nine million to 4.5 million and costs are down 55 per cent
- ✔ Green Fleet Strategy being developed
- ✔ Fleet management focusing on improved use and new vehicle ownership models
- ✔ Carbon-friendly vehicle replacement strategy underway

“Energy Saving Trust advised us to move towards developing a strategy of a centrally managed fleet. Although it is early days, we are already taking opportunities to rationalise, to get rid of some vehicles altogether and to improve the utilisation of those that remain. We have a target for the whole city to reduce its carbon emissions by 60 per cent and are looking to lead the way with our own fleet. Energy Saving Trust has shown us that change is not only necessary but possible.”

CLlr Lisa Trickett, Cabinet Member for a Green, Smart and Sustainable City.

Find out how the Energy Saving Trust can help you reduce emissions and save money. Visit our website

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Organisations/Transport

or contact **transportadvice@est.org.uk**