Challenge
The University of Cumbria’s vehicle fleet was typical of many universities. It featured ageing vehicles with low mileage, but high maintenance costs.

The focus here was to manage these costs, while reducing carbon emissions and air pollution on campus.

Solution
Energy Saving Trust first started working with the University in 2012 as part of the Plugged-in Fleets Initiative. A comprehensive fleet analysis led to the initial uptake of one electric van on campus. This proved to be just the start.

A follow up implementation project in 2016 found a more sustainable situation, due to the introduction of the electric van and consolidation to a smaller, but more highly utilised fleet. However, there was still room to make further improvements. With an average vehicle age of 11 years, many vans were due for replacement. Doing this would bring maintenance savings, air quality improvement and carbon reduction, whilst still being practical within the mileage profile of the vehicles.

Results
Energy Saving Trust quantified the ongoing costs of running these older vans and identified those where switching to a ULEV equivalent made sense. The University agreed with the logic.

There are now five Nissan e-NV200 fully electric vans based on campuses, bringing the proportion of EVs in its van fleet up to 50%. This has not only proved positive from a cost and air quality perspective. Feedback from drivers suggests that the vehicles are ‘easy and comfortable, very quiet’.

The move has led to deeper change. The University has decided upon a procurement policy where electric will be the default fuel for future vehicle leases or purchases. A special case will have to be made for the procurement of a ‘standard’ fuel vehicle – a notable reversal on traditional thinking.

To find out how the Energy Saving Trust can help you cut carbon emissions and save money, visit energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport

To apply for a Green Fleet or Ultra-low Emission Vehicle Review, call 020 7222 0101 or email transportadvice@est.org.uk