

SPECIAL REPORT

# INCREASED APPEAL OF THE CR-V

Advanced powertrain puts SUV at the forefront  
in terms of efficiency and refinement



In association with





Phil Webb has been 'blown away' by the reaction to the Urban EV

# Going Platinum is paying off

Having specialists in showrooms is hitting the right note with corporate clients

**H**onda is a brand renowned for innovation. In 1999, it was one of the earliest pioneers of hybrid technology, with the launch of the original Insight.

While it is about to re-enter the alternative fuel sector with the new CR-V Hybrid, it has also been innovating behind the scenes to improve its fleet and corporate offering.

Its Virtual Account Manager, which was named best innovation in sales at the UK Professional Sales Awards last year, offers support to small- and medium-sized business who do not have a dedicated fleet manager and have limited time to dedicate to vehicle procurement.

This forms part of an internal programme to help the brand provide improved service to corporate customers as well as making it easier to deal with.

"We are never going to be a huge player in the fleet market because there are only certain sectors that our car range is applicable to," says Phil Webb, head of cars at Honda UK.

"Corporate will continue to be completely integral to us, but what we do want is to be in certain sectors of the fleet market at a consistent level, selling quality cars into quality sectors."

"We do around 16,000 corporate units a year, and we are looking to make sure those are the right types of units for our dealer network and our product range."

Honda UK began looking at how it could improve its offering to the corporate sector around three-and-a-half years ago. It launched its Honda Platinum Programme 18 months later.

The initiative, which is currently taken up by around 110 of

**16,000**  
units a year sold in the corporate market

**110**  
dealers are taking part in Platinum Programme

Honda's 150 dealers, aims to ensure that its network is better equipped and informed to deal with corporate customers.

This involves offering advanced training for dealer principals, sales managers and sales advisors, allowing them to better understand the needs and wants of their fleet and corporate customers.

It also enables participating dealers to have specialists in their showrooms who can talk to user-choosers about which vehicles and powertrains would be most suited to their requirements, as well as explaining the tax implications of different choices.

Dealers are also able to provide corporate demonstrators, as well as allowing the customer to borrow the vehicle on an extended test drive if required.

Webb said part of the programme involves changing the mindset of dealers towards potential corporate customers if they intend to acquire a vehicle via another channel and not through the dealership.

"Some dealers would shy away from that naturally, but we are trying to help them be engaged and therefore be capable with regards to a specialist person in the showroom," he adds.

"That's been received well by our corporate customers as it means they are being treated in a way that really helps them."

Honda UK has also restructured its corporate team to make it an easier and simpler company to deal with.

This has seen it introduce its virtual account management programme which offers expert fleet management support

to businesses by telephone and video conferencing, as an alternative to solely face-to-face meetings.

The restructuring of the team saw a number of new roles being created.

"We now have the right roles looking at the right areas that fit our business and our strategy on corporate, and that has enabled us to be consistent in the marketplace because we have got specialists in place now, and that includes both people based in the office and out in the field," says Webb.

"We now have definitive people performing definitive roles, for example, the sales team, pricing team and public sector teams."

"Corporate is an area where people-to-people business is still very important, and some of the big fleet customers need to speak to the right people at the right time and get the right information. We've worked with that very strongly over the past couple of years, and that has helped us and given us a much stronger position."

"We feel we now have a structure that will enable us to continue with what we have started to achieve and improve our focus for fleet through our dealer network."

Honda UK's improved fleet offering also extends to its car range. Jazz is traditionally strong with public sector fleets, a new Civic – Honda's main fleet model – was launched last year, while the CR-V and H-RV offer choices in the growing SUV sectors.

Civic, which is manufactured in Swindon, launched last year in a petrol version. A 1.6-litre i-DETEC diesel – offering official combined fuel economy up to 83.1mpg and CO<sub>2</sub> from 91g/km – followed earlier this year, despite continuing negative press about the fuel.

"There was quite a lot of questioning on why we were bringing the diesel to the marketplace, but we were adamant that diesel was always planned through the lifecycle of the latest Civic, and it will be a very important part of our offering," says Webb.

"It has already been well received. We know that there is still an opportunity on diesel, especially for Civic, because it will be the right car and fuel choice for many customers."

Honda has announced that two-thirds of its cars sold in



The fully-electric Urban EV will go on sale at the end of 2019. See page 12 for more details of Honda's electrification strategy

Europe by 2025 will feature electrified powertrains, and the CR-V Hybrid will be the first step towards that when it is launched early next year.

The Honda Hybrid Performance system features intelligent Multi-Mode Drive (i-MMD) technology comprising two electric motors, an Atkinson-cycle petrol engine and a direct transmission delivering high levels of efficiency and refinement.

Rather than using a conventional transmission, a single fixed-gear ratio creates a direct connection between moving components, resulting in a smoother transfer of torque.

"Our target is that we will get CR-V Hybrids into our dealerships and into potential fleet customers in February, leading up to the March plate change," says Webb.

"We can't wait to get people trying the car because it is the first hybrid with the latest Honda technology and we see it as a great opportunity."

"Our challenge is to make sure we get that USP of how the powertrain works across to customers, both retail and fleet, so we are going to do a lot of work with our customer-facing staff to enable us to talk about not only facts and figures, but what it also means in terms of how it drives."

"If you look at that fact that Honda is known for its innovation, CR-V Hybrid will be a massive launch for us because technology counts."

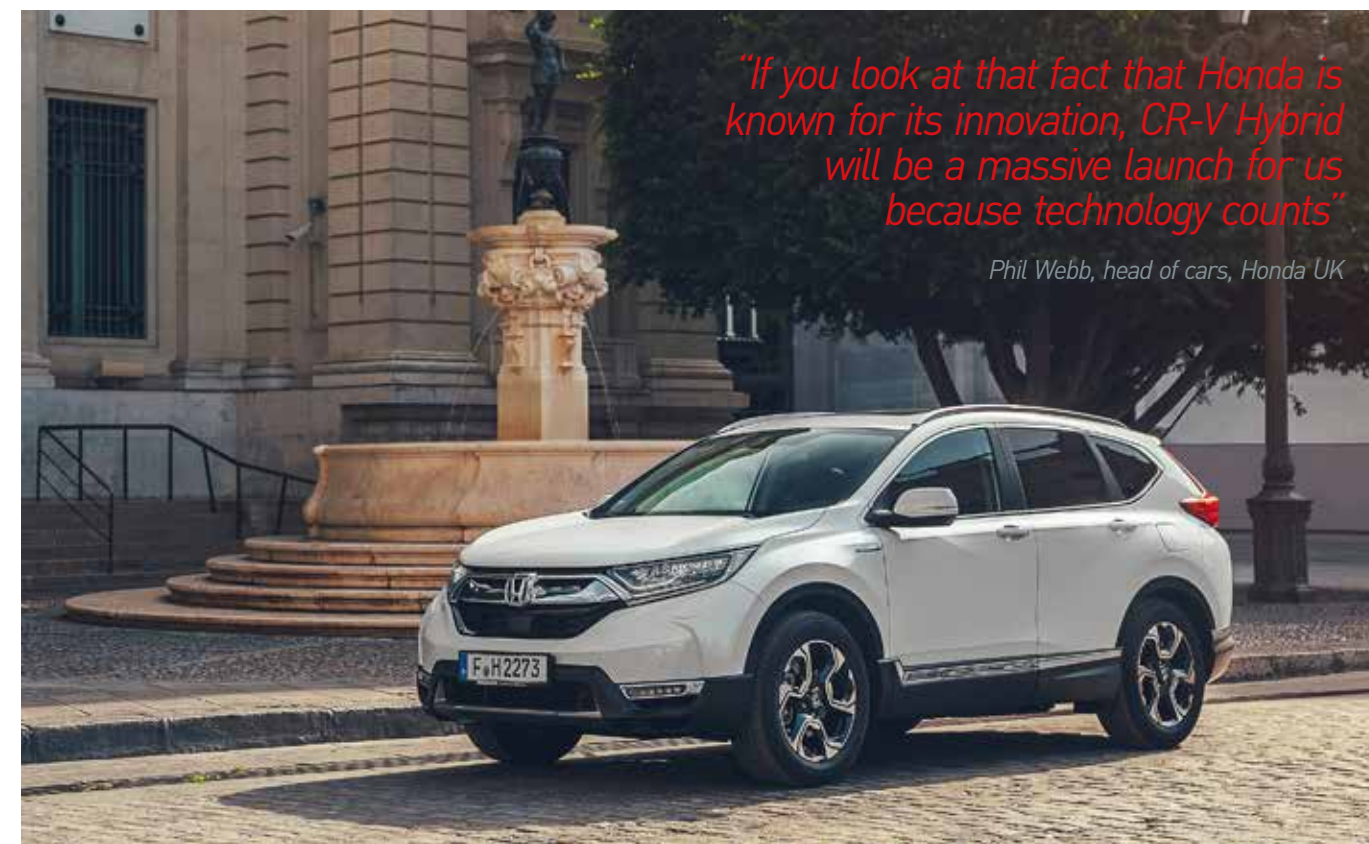
He adds: "People forget that Honda was at the forefront of hybrid technology and now we feel it is the right time to start reintroducing that technology."

"At the end of September year-on-year, alternative fuel vehicle sales were up by about 22%. Those are still quite small numbers in the UK, but you can't ignore the trend and the focus they are now getting."

Webb says that from now on all full model changes will include a hybrid version.

However, the next new model to feature an electrified powertrain is the fully-electric Urban EV, which has been seen at motor shows around Europe, and will go on sale at the end of 2019.

"The reaction we've had from that car has, well, blown me away quite honestly," says Webb.



*"If you look at that fact that Honda is known for its innovation, CR-V Hybrid will be a massive launch for us because technology counts"*

Phil Webb, head of cars, Honda UK



# Meet the corporate team

Honda UK has restructured its corporate team to ensure it delivers a high level of service. Here we look at team members and their responsibilities

## Marc Samuel, fleet sales operations manager



Marc Samuel took responsibility for leading Honda UK's corporate team in January last year. He has vast experience of the fleet and wider automotive sector, and was previously national sales manager for Honda UK. He took the fleet sales operations manager role to help shape Honda's renewed focus on corporate business and promote its range of new and relaunched cars, along with its dedicated fleet and corporate service.

## Jacqueline Rowe, fleet engagement section manager



Jacqueline Rowe has more than 25 years' experience of working in the automotive sector and joined Honda to set up and manage the Virtual Account team, which is responsible for account management of SME customers. Rowe is also responsible for Honda's contract hire channel, as well as ownership of the corporate customer journey with the corporate website, PR and marketing. She also manages, on behalf of Honda, relationships with automotive bodies such as BVRLA and ACFD.

## Angela Hall, national leasing manager



Angela Hall was appointed to her role in January 2016 and is responsible for the relationships with the major leasing companies within the FN50. She has worked for Honda UK for more than 15 years in a variety of roles including corporate sales manager, major corporate sales manager and regional sales manager.

## Simon Barrett, national leasing manager



Simon Barrett has 18 years' experience working in the automotive industry and worked with two of the UK's largest leasing companies before joining Honda fleet department in 2007. He has held his current role since 2016 and is responsible for relationships with a number of FN50 leasing companies.

## VIRTUAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Honda UK's corporate team restructuring also saw the creation of a virtual account management programme aimed at small- to medium-sized businesses who do not have a dedicated fleet manager. Virtual Account Manager, which was named Best Innovation in Sales at the UK Professional Sales Awards last year offers expert fleet management support to customers by telephone and video conferencing as an alternative to solely face-to-face meetings.



Josh Latham, Business Centre Manager

### Other team members are:



Phil Gidion, Virtual Account manager – Midlands and South Wales



Jacob Duffield, Virtual Account manager – north of Manchester, Scotland and Northern Ireland



Jack Horrocks, Virtual Account manager – South (Kent-Cornwall including London)



Michael Barlow, Virtual Account manager – Midlands and North Wales

## Kevin Parsons, pricing and wholelife cost manager



Kevin Parsons joined Honda from pricing experts Glass's Guide in 2016 and manages the relationship with key guides and influencers such as Cap HPI and KeeResources, as well as the leasing companies' pricing and risk teams. He works closely with the SMMT and is a member of their environment policy committee, WLTP task force and electric vehicle working group.

## David Bolwell, national major account manager



David Bolwell joined Honda a little more than 12 months ago but has nearly 20 years' experience in the automotive industry, with the majority of those in various manufacturer fleet sales roles. He also maintains responsibility for sales to the public sector, daily rental and Honda dealer local business channels.

## Dave Lythgoe, major account manager north



Dave Lythgoe has worked in the automotive industry for 22 years, 18 of which have been spent in corporate sales. This has included working for several large manufacturers and a multi-franchise dealer group.

## Ben Morris, major account manager south



Ben Morris looks after the major accounts in the south of the country. He has wide experience of the automotive industry and lists working for funders, dealers and manufacturers on his CV.

## Jennifer Hindle, car sales operation graduate



Jennifer Hindle joined Honda on the graduate scheme in September 2017 and recently joined the fleet sales operation team.

## Chris Vallance, dealer programme – south



Chris Vallance works with the Honda dealer network to ensure it provides fleet, leasing and procurement customers a guaranteed level of service. He also supports the Honda network in maintaining corporate standards.



# Fleet sales may not grab the headlines, but they are vital

More than 100 dealers sign up to improve their corporate sales skills

Car dealers are trained in all manner of disciplines, from personal skills such as building a rapport with customers, to more specialised practices like using complex dealer management databases.

All this is well documented, and a quick browse of the internet will find a host of businesses offering courses and seminars to build proficiency among sales staff.

But there's an aspect of dealer training that gets less exposure – working with the specific wants and needs of fleets and corporate customers.

Perhaps it's strange that outside these pages, there's very little mention of the way in which car dealers treat fleet customers (which, let's not forget, make up more than half the new car market) when there are so many stories, both good and bad, about their behaviour towards private buyers.

Honda wants to change the record slightly, though, and the company is immensely proud of its fleet-centric Platinum Programme.

Devised to train site managers and their sales executives in dealing with the specific needs of fleet customers, it has now seen more than 100 of Honda's franchised dealers sign up.

Once enrolled on the scheme, these retailers will be able to offer fleet customers a more bespoke service, with face-to-face sales assistance, such as helping them choose the best vehicle for their mileage or explaining taxation and contract terms.

But as well as offering customers a more knowledgeable and tailored service, the scheme also provides corporate

**100+**  
Honda dealerships are signed up to the Platinum Programme

*“Creating a programme that will allow us to enhance our engagement with fleet and corporate custom is pivotal”*

Marc Samuel, Honda UK

48-hour test drives, which allow fleet managers to live with the car for a few days and better understand how it would fit with their needs and requirements.

It sounds like a simple fix – almost too much of a common-sense solution to merit mentioning – but Honda says the approach is crucial to its success in the huge fleet market.

With the introduction of this scheme across its network Honda can prevent its dealers losing valuable fleet customers through a lack of understanding, and also ensure it retains customers throughout the vehicle lifecycle and beyond.

After all, customers who receive solid information and guidance are more likely to put their faith in the dealer's aftersales service and will probably return when the time comes to renew their fleet.

And from the fleet manager's point of view, the promise of better information from more knowledgeable sales staff, as well as continued dealer support, will take some of the stress out of fleet renewals and maintenance.

Marc Samuel, fleet sales operations manager at Honda UK, said the dealer engagement with the scheme was not just positive news for fleet customers, but was also vital to Honda's future success.

“Having 100 dealerships signed up to the initiative is testament to our network's commitment to delivering the best service to customers across our various offerings,” he said.

“Fleet and corporate custom is pivotal to our success, so creating a programme that would allow us to enhance our engagement with them is paramount. The fact that the majority of the dealer network has backed the incentive is extremely encouraging to see.”





# Honda sets new standards with its Civic investment

Extensive real-world testing marks biggest outlay in carmaker's history

**J**oining the all-new tenth generation Honda Civic line-up is an efficient new diesel model. It features a comprehensively revised 1.6-litre i-DTEC diesel engine, offering an outstanding combination of performance and efficiency. The Civic range comprises of a five-door hatch and four-door saloon, available with a range of powertrains from the entry-level three-cylinder turbo petrol to the high performance Type R.

## PERFORMANCE AND EFFICIENCY

The new i-DTEC diesel engine has been engineered to provide athletic response, greater refinement and lower levels of NOx emissions.

It provides maximum power of 120PS and maximum torque of 300Nm. The Civic diesel can accelerate to 62mph in just 10.5 seconds.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are as low as 93g/km in the hatch (91g/km saloon) and drivers can expect average fuel economy of up to 83mpg.

A six-speed manual gearbox is fitted as standard. Customers can also specify a nine-speed automatic, designed specifically for the diesel engines.

Alongside the diesel, the Civic is available with a 1.0-litre VTEC TURBO that develops 126PS and emits from just 107g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>, with combined fuel economy from 60.1mpg.

There is also a 1.5-litre VTEC TURBO engine (hatch only), which develops 182PS.

## CHASSIS AND HANDLING

The Civic benefits from the largest single model global development programme in the company's history.

Under the skin, the tenth-generation Civic features the

**10.4**  
seconds to achieve 60mph  
on CVT-equipped model

**519**  
litres of luggage space  
available

*“Under the skin the 10th generation Civic features the most sophisticated chassis dynamics set-up in the model's history”*

most sophisticated chassis dynamics set up in the model's history. The design team set themselves the target of achieving class-best handling and ride comfort.

During its development, Honda engineers conducted extensive real-world benchmark testing, including assessment of European luxury vehicles, in setting the targets for ride, handling, steering and NVH, as well as interior quality and overall refinement.

The new Civic has been engineered from the ground up to fulfil the promise of agile and rewarding dynamics. A light-weight, highly rigid bodyshell – the product of innovative new engineering and construction techniques – complements the lower centre of gravity and a sophisticated new suspension system in contributing directly to an engaging and fun driving experience.

The Civic's development team sought to achieve the most aerodynamically efficient body in the compact class, balancing low aerodynamic drag with high-speed stability. It achieved this through careful management of airflow over and under the car to minimise lift.

To improve driveability further, the driving position is lower than in the previous generation Civic, creating a more secure, enveloped feeling for the driver and front passenger. Visibility has also been improved.

The variable-ratio electric power-assisted steering has been specifically tuned for the new model to reflect its secure handling. The system was pioneered on the 2016 Civic Type R performance hatchback and is conventionally deployed only on premium or performance vehicles.

## PRACTICALITY

Boot space for the Civic hatchback remains class-leading in terms of volume (478 litres), as well as ease of access and versatility. The folding rear seats have a 60:40 split and the

low sill height (679mm) and wide boot opening (1,120 mm) combine with the flat boot floor to make the loading of large, heavy items easy.

In the Civic saloon, luggage volume is 20% greater than before, with 519 litres of space available.

## TECHNOLOGY

At the top of the centre console sits the seven-inch Honda Connect colour touchscreen display. It controls the infotainment and climate functions.

Honda Connect gives rapid access to internet-based services such as web browsing, real-time traffic information, news and weather, social media, and internet music stations. It features pre-installed apps, with others available for download from the Honda App Centre for owners to personalise their connected experience.

The touchscreen displays vehicle information – such as trip information and fuel economy – and images from the rear-view parking camera.

Honda Connect can be specified with Garmin satellite navigation, with pre-loaded maps, photo-real junction views, lane guidance, real-time traffic avoidance, 3D building and terrain views, and Eco Routing. Free map updates are provided for five years, a benefit unique to Honda.

Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are also both included, so occupants can seamlessly integrate Honda Connect with their smartphone.

In front of the driver, a new seven-inch colour TFT-LCD Driver Information Interface (DII) display includes a large digital tachometer – with analogue or digital rev needle, dependent on the model grade – and a digital speedometer readout.

## SAFETY AND SPECIFICATION

All grades of Civic feature the Honda SENSING suite of active safety and driver-assist technologies.

Model	Grade	Transmission	CO <sub>2</sub>	P11D price	MPG
<b>Hatchback</b>					
1.6 i-DTEC	SE	Man	93	£20,250	80.7
1.6 i-DTEC	SR	Man	93	£22,095	80.7
1.6 i-DTEC	EX	Man	93	£24,955	80.7
1.6 i-DTEC	SR	Auto	109	£23,745	68.9
1.6 i-DTEC	EX	Auto	109	£26,605	68.9
<b>Saloon</b>					
1.6 i-DTEC	SE	Man	91	£20,750	83.1
1.6 i-DTEC	SR	Man	91	£22,595	83.1
1.6 i-DTEC	EX	Man	91	£25,455	83.1
1.6 i-DTEC	SE	Auto	108	£22,415	68.9
1.6 i-DTEC	SR	Auto	108	£24,245	68.9
1.6 i-DTEC	EX	Auto	108	£27,105	68.9

It includes Forward Collision Warning, Lane Departure Warning with Lane-Keeping Assist, Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control and Traffic Sign Recognition.

The new Civic hatch diesel is available in three grades. The entry-level SE grade is generously equipped and includes automatic headlights, adaptive cruise control and the Honda SENSING suite of advanced active safety technologies.

The SR benefits from the Honda Connect infotainment suite, front and rear parking sensors, rear parking camera and dual-zone air conditioning.

Range-topping EX versions feature leather upholstery, LED front headlamp clusters, smart keyless entry and start, power tilt panoramic sunroof, premium audio system and Dynamic Damper Control system and Blind Spot Monitoring.



# CR-V has big corporate appeal

Advanced hybrid powertrain is coupled with numerous safety features

**H**onda's all-new CR-V will become the first SUV hybrid launched in Europe by the brand when it goes on sale at the start of next year. Its advanced hybrid powertrain features intelligent Multi-Mode Drive (i-MMD) technology comprising two electric motors, a 2.0-litre petrol engine and an innovative direct transmission delivering high levels of efficiency and refinement.

The compact SUV will offer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 120g/km and official fuel economy of 53.3mpg under the WLTP-derived NEDC-correlated combined cycle, and will join 1.5 VTEC Turbo petrol-engined models – which went on sale in September.

The 1.5 VTEC Turbo engine was first seen in the latest Civic and has been adapted to include an exclusively-designed turbocharger.

It produces 173PS when equipped with the six-speed manual gearbox and 193PS for CVT models.

Official CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are 143g/km for the manual front-wheel drive model and 162g/km for CVT-equipped cars, which are fitted with all-wheel drive as standard.

Fuel economy on the NEDC combined cycle is 44.8mpg for the manual front-wheel drive model and 39.8mpg for the CVT AWD car.

The new engines are one of the many advancements the new CR-V offers over its predecessor.

The new model raises the bar in terms of interior quality, sophistication and spaciousness, including – for the first time – the option of seven seats.

It is slightly larger than its predecessor with a 30mm longer wheelbase but retains the familiar silhouette of its predecessor. It features broader wheel arches and sharper contours on the bonnet and rear quarters, as well as the latest Honda signature headlight graphic.

The larger dimensions have enabled Honda to increase interior room for passengers, while the boot now has the biggest loading bay 'footprint' in the CR-V model line's history.

The 160mm increase in width and a maximum loading length of 1,830mm – is up 250mm on the previous model (1,800mm for the seven-seater vehicle).

The interior of the new CR-V has a more premium feel

*"The new model raises the bar in terms of interior quality sophistication and spaciousness"*

than before, while Honda has also rationalised the screen layout compared to the previous generation CR-V.

It now features just one central touchscreen in addition to the seven-inch driver information interface (DII), which includes a large digital speedometer and linear tachometer, visible through the steering wheel.

The second-generation Honda Connect software offers enhanced intuitive operations and full smartphone integration via both Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

The CR-V is based on Honda's latest chassis design, which is lighter and more rigid than before. It features a new generation of ultra-high tensile steel for improved dynamics and crash-worthiness.

The new platform contributes to the class-leading interior quietness and refinement, as does extensive sound sealing and insulation techniques.

Minimised generation of engine noise is aided by the first application of Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) in a CR-V. This system uses two in-cabin microphones to monitor noises from the engine, and can then create precisely timed 'reverse phase' audio signals to cancel them out.

CR-V is available in four trim levels, ranging from entry-level S grade to SE, SR and the top of the range EX.

Standard across all grades is parking sensors and a rear view camera as well as Honda's suite of safety features, including collision mitigation braking system, forward collision warning, lane-keep assist, lane departure warning, road departure mitigation, adaptive cruise control and traffic sign recognition.

SR and EX will also feature blind spot warning and cross-traffic monitoring, while the CVT version will feature low speed follow.

SR grade also adds smart entry and start, leather interior, active cornering lights and front windscreen de-icer.

EX further includes a heated steering wheel, head up display, hands-free access power tailgate, heated rear seats and panoramic glass sunroof.

**120**  
g/km CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

The CR-V has a bigger interior for passengers and an increased boot space

# Civic diesel is one of the most cost-effective choices for fleets

RV setters Cap HPI say it will hold up to 37% of its value after 36 months

**C**lass-leading residual values (RVs) will provide fleet customers choosing a new Honda Civic diesel with substantial savings in wholelife costs when compared to the car's key rivals.

Following the positive reception the new Honda Civic 1.6 i-DTEC diesel has received since launch, the hatchback is now claiming best-in-class RVs.

Industry experts and RV setters Cap HPI forecast the British-built Civic diesel will hold up to 37% of its value after 36 months and 60,000 miles.

That means the Civic diesel offers a 4% higher RV than the equivalent Volkswagen Golf.

Marc Samuel, fleet sales operations manager at Honda UK, said: "These RVs once again re-emphasise why the Civic diesel is an impressive offering for fleets. When compared with key competitors, the Civic comes out on top in RVs and its market-leading emissions performance, highlighting Honda's commitment to making its cars even more affordable and efficient. Coupling this with the Honda Sensing safety features as standard in the Civic, it is a highly competitive choice for fleets."

Data from KeeResources shows savings of almost £1,500 can be expected across a typical three-year contract by choosing a Civic 1.6i-DTEC SR over, say, the Volkswagen Golf 1.6TDI SE NAV. That equates to more than £40 per month on a single car.

Opting for the Civic instead of a Ford Focus 1.5TDCi Titanium sees savings of more than £900 over the same three year period.

*"These RVs once again re-emphasise why the Civic diesel is an impressive offering for fleets"*

Marc Samuel, Honda UK

Companies will also be £415.22 better off when opting for the Civic over the Mazda 3 Hatch 1.5 Skyactiv-D.

On-the-road prices for the Honda Civic start at just £19,100, with the diesel SR model costing from £22,295.

Samuel added: "Driving down wholelife costs is a priority for Honda and the new Civic diesel really delivers. For fleets looking for a diesel option, a saving of £1,485.65 over a contract period of 36 months is hugely significant and this, coupled with the Civic's safety, performance and drive, makes it a compelling choice for fleets."

The savings are also due to the Civic's competitive finance and lower overall running costs – including class-leading fuel economy of more than 80mpg. Compared to the Golf, the Civic is more than 1p per mile cheaper to run on fuel. It also offers competitive SMR costs.

Featuring a revised i-DTEC diesel engine, the latest Civic is a result of Honda's largest global development programme for a single model. It emits just 93g/km, making it one of the cleanest diesels in the segment.

It is also among the cheapest for benefit-in-kind tax.



The Civic diesel has improved RVs, competitive finance and lower running costs

	Honda Civic Hatch 5Dr 1.6i-DTEC 120 StopStart EU6 SR	Volkswagen Golf Hatch 5Dr 1.6TDI 115 StopStart EU6 SE Nav	Ford Focus Hatch 5Dr 1.5TDCi 120 StopStart EU6 Titanium 19MY	Mazda 3 Hatch 5Dr 1.5 SKYACTIV-D 105 StopStart EU6 SE-L Nav
P11D price	£20,745	£22,440	£22,320	£21,595
WLC per month	£741.59	£782.99	£766.85	£753.13
Residual value (3yr/60k)	37%	33%	30%	35%





Brinn Bevan was one of the first gymnasts to receive a Civic

## The drive to be medal winners

Honda in ninth year of supporting Britain's gymnasts on the road to Games glory

Gymnastics is not necessarily the first discipline that comes to mind when you talk about elite sport – the likes of football and athletics often take those plaudits – but a host of Olympic successes and the uncanny ability of reality TV to cement a personality's reputation has brought the sport to the fore.

Throw in the ongoing interest shown after the 2012 Olympics and sizeable medal hauls at the heavily televised Commonwealth Games and World Championships, and there's no doubt that it's a sport that's on the up.

But, as the influence and participation levels in gymnastics have grown, the governing body, British Gymnastics has built up a raft of partners to help it deliver on its mission – namely bringing gymnastics to a wider audience.

From sponsors to merchandise retailers and from equipment suppliers to music providers, there's no shortage of teams working to help the organisation succeed.

But while all these aspects are, of course, crucial to British Gymnastics' success, few are as involved as Honda, the Japanese brand with a strong connection to the UK thanks to its Swindon manufacturing plant.

The company is British Gymnastics' sole vehicle supplier, and has been for the past 10 years. After winning a further three-year contract in 2017, Honda has spent the past 12 months supplying around 45 vehicles to the organisation, helping the team stay mobile and carry out the behind-the-scenes tasks that are crucial to the athletes' sporting success.

As news of the extended partnership was announced last

*"We're looking forward to building this relationship further and continuing to enjoy its benefits"*

Nigel Hill,  
British Gymnastics

year, Dave Lythgoe, a major account manager at Honda UK, said the company would do all it could to support the team and help it replicate the success of the past few years.

"We're extremely proud of our relationship with British Gymnastics as it enters its ninth year," he said.

"It's a huge honour for us to be associated with the success that the team is enjoying and to support it in some way. We hope we can continue to support the team both in and out of the gym."

British Gymnastics chose Honda for the role in light of the safety features fitted to the vehicles, which the organisation hopes will protect the athletes as they make their way to and from training, competitions and media engagements.

Other key factors in the decision included the low carbon dioxide emissions and fuel consumption of Honda's diesel products.

Among the first to receive their vehicles were gymnasts Brinn Bevan and Kelly Simm, who were each handed a 1.6-litre diesel-powered Civic at British Gymnastics' Shropshire base by local dealer JT Hughes Honda.

Nigel Hill, commercial director at British Gymnastics, said Honda's support of the organisation was "fantastic" and that the cars the company had provided were helping staff and team members fulfil their roles effectively.

"The support we continue to receive from Honda UK is fantastic," he said. "The cars continue to be invaluable in getting athletes to their various engagements safely. We're looking forward to building this relationship further and continuing to enjoy its benefits."

# Honda to launch its interactive whole lifecycle costs calculator

Web-based tool will make it easy to compare Honda prices with those of rivals

Honda UK is taking action to make purchasing decisions easier for fleet managers with the pending launch of its unique, interactive whole lifecycle costs (WLC) calculator.

The tool will be accessible from January 19 through the recently launched new Honda Fleet website. It will enable users to calculate and compare how much a vehicle will cost throughout its entire lifespan.

Fleet operators will be able to compare key metrics such as service, maintenance and repair (SMR) costs and residual values (RVs) on Honda models with rival vehicles from other manufacturers, to see the potential real-life savings available when choosing a Honda.

Company car drivers should also benefit, by seeing the comparative benefit-in-kind (BIK) tax payable on different models – providing total clarity before they make a final choice on their next car.

The tool will form part of the brand's strategy to engage more effectively with fleet customers and end users.

The aim of the new website is to significantly improve the customer experience for fleet managers, enabling them to more effectively judge vehicle costs and get closer to Honda's growing range of fleet solutions.

In addition, the website now includes an option for fleet customers to book a 48-hour test drive of their preferred model, helping drivers and fleet managers gain full confidence and peace of mind in their choice.

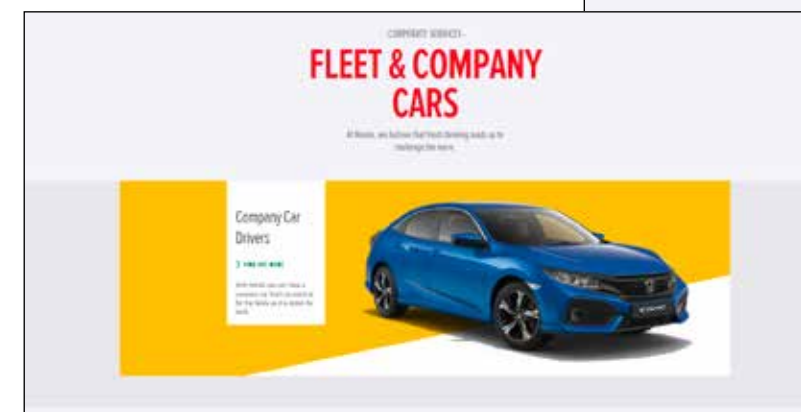
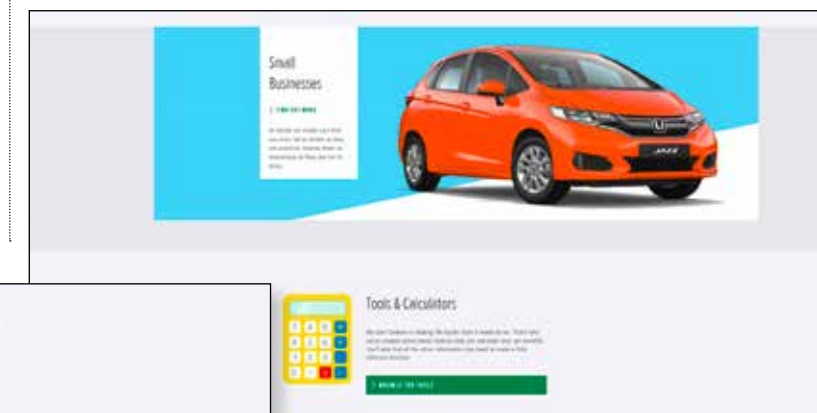
Marc Samuel, fleet sales operations manager, Honda UK, commented: "We recognise that businesses are repeatedly focusing on individual repair prices and transactions when looking at vehicle costs.

"Wholife costing gives a more accurate method of effectively judging vehicle expenditure.

"Our soon-to-be-available interactive calculator will enable fleet managers to understand the fuel costs, SMR costs and insurance. User-choosers will be able to compare their BIK alongside national insurance contributions (NICs).

"That way, corporate customers protect any investment they make in a Honda vehicle."

Honda has already been recognised in the fleet sector for being a competitive force in the C-segment market, with the Honda Civic demonstrating the lowest wholelife costs compared with key competitor models.



*"We recognise businesses are repeatedly focusing on individual repair prices and transactions when looking at vehicle costs"*

Marc Samuel, Honda UK





# Where electric fits in Honda mix

Two-thirds of European sales to comprise electric, hybrid or hydrogen vehicles



**A**ll too often, advancements in the motor industry go unnoticed by the outside world. Ask the people down your local high street about autonomous vehicles, for example, and you can bet that most of them won't really understand where the technology has reached.

But even the most disinterested of observers is aware that the way we fuel our cars is going to change dramatically over the coming years. Everywhere we look, government, big business and media tell us that petrol and diesel are old hat, soon to be replaced with a wave of high-tech, low-emission vehicles.

The big car manufacturers have responded, revealing a tidal wave of new models with electric this and hybrid that. And, perhaps unsurprisingly, given the brand's history of innovation, Honda has positioned itself once more at the sharp end of this green revolution.

Even before the demonisation of diesel, Honda had cracked the hybrid conundrum, bringing out a hybrid version of the evergreen Jazz and the svelte CR-Z coupe. Then, in 2016, the new NSX hybrid supercar was rolled out, providing proof – were it needed – that electrified cars don't have to be boring.

And let's not forget the firm's pioneering work on hydrogen-powered cars.

The FCX Clarity was introduced to the US market 10 years ago, becoming the first hydrogen car ever to be unleashed on the general public.

More recently, a second-generation Clarity has arrived, offering a claimed range of more than 400 miles on the



**ABOVE AND RIGHT:** Honda's Urban EV concept was unveiled at the Geneva Motorshow

*"We will leverage Honda's global R&D resources to accelerate the introduction of a full portfolio of advanced, electrified powertrains"*

*Katsushi Inoue,  
Honda Europe*



now-defunct New European Driving Cycle (NEDC), while there's movement on the hybrid front, too. The introduction of a new "two-motor" hybrid system for the CR-V SUV earlier this year showed us that hybrid power is a very viable option for mainstream family cars.

Honda, then, has hardly been a shrinking violet in the pantheon of low-emission car manufacturing, and the company wants to ensure that remains the case.

At last year's Geneva Motor Show, the company announced its intention to push forward with its 'Electric Vision', which will see a host of hybrid, electric and hydrogen-powered cars introduced across Europe.

The overall aim? By 2025, Honda wants two-thirds of its European sales to be made up of electric, hybrid or hydrogen vehicles.

It's a plan that drips with ambition, but one that the Tokyo-based business says is well within the capabilities of its massive global team.

Speaking as the Vision Electric scheme was unveiled, the boss of Honda's European division, Katsushi Inoue, said: "We will leverage Honda's global R&D resources to accelerate the introduction of a full portfolio of advanced, electrified powertrains for the European customer."

As Inoue's words suggest, Honda has an electric vehicle offensive in the pipeline. Over the next few years, we can look forward to a deluge of new models and powertrains that offer us cleaner, greener ways of getting around. And, if the British Government plays its part on the taxation front, they ought to be cheaper to run for both fleet managers and company car drivers, too.

**LEFT:** A second-generation Clarity claims a range of 400 miles