

Car-sharing firm zips across to petrol vans in bid to cut diesel use

We have all heard of car-sharing schemes. Perhaps you have even used one while visiting other parts of the world, or the Locomute service in SA. Until now they have been about cars and the ability to jump into a vehicle in various cities around the world, drive to your destination and then park it for someone else to use.



Image Source: [Business Day](#). Picture: NEWSPRESS UK

But what if you could borrow a van? For example, when you buy a new couch and suddenly realise it will not fit in the boot of your BMW.

A year-long petrol van pilot in London

Members of the car-sharing network Zipcar are now able to drive a Volkswagen (VW) Transporter van, as Zipcar and VW embark on a year-long pilot in London. It is not a new thing, as Zipcar already has more than 400 vans available in the city which can be used from an hour to a day.

However, what is different about this pilot is the VW vans are petrol versions rather than the other 400, which are diesel. The 10 new Transporter models, all T28 Trendline panel vans with a 2.0l TSI engine and manual gearbox, can be rented from Zipcar's London-based fleet locations.

Commenting on the petrol van pilot, Jonathan Hampson, GM of Zipcar UK, says: "The mayor of London recently outlined plans to actively reduce the use of diesel in the capital. We have already completed the removal of diesel from our car fleet, and while this is significantly more complex in the commercial vehicle market, we're delighted to partner with Volkswagen to continue with this process.

"We're confident the vans will perform well and be suitable for our members.

"We've also ensured that the message comes across through the livery that these vans are petrol-fuelled, to encourage companies to consider their options when it comes to their commercial fleets."

Millions of additional trips good news for Zipcar

Data from Carplus shows that car club members in the UK have increased by 49% in the past four years. London's population is forecast to increase to 10.5-million over the next 25 years, which is expected to generate five-million additional trips each day by 2041 according to the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy released earlier in 2017.

This will all be good news for Zipcar, which is the world's largest car-sharing scheme, with more than one million members and 12,000 vehicles in about 500 cities.

The petrol van pilot shows how the world is changing as even the commercial vehicle market is displaying signs of turning against diesel, at least in the smaller van sector.

Guidance

"The van market is currently dominated by diesel, but we know that customers are aware of changes to legislation and looking for other options," says Sara Cox, head of marketing at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles UK. "They're scanning the market for guidance on what will be right for their fleets not just today or tomorrow, but in three or five years' time. We're pleased to be able to offer customers, in collaboration with Zipcar, the chance to try something new."

A number of car-sharing schemes - including Zipcar, which is a subsidiary of Avis Budget, and BMW's DriveNow - are looking at SA as an option.

Neither sees SA as suitable right now and are watching to see how our infrastructure develops as well as whether our crime situation improves before they decide.

Source: Business Day

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