

Written evidence submitted by the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) (AAS0042)

The British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association (BVRLA) represents one of the UK's largest groups of vehicle owners. Our membership is responsible for a combined fleet of four million cars, vans and trucks – one-in-ten of all vehicles on UK roads. They spend more than £30 billion upgrading their fleets each year and are responsible for buying around 50% of new vehicles sold annually in the UK, including 83% of vehicles manufactured in the UK for sale in the UK. The vehicle rental and leasing industry supports over 465,000 jobs, adds £7.6 billion in tax revenues and contributes £49 billion to the UK economy each year.

- **60% of vehicle rental customers picked up their vehicle from a transport hub such as an airport in 2018. ([BVRLA, Car and Van Rental in the UK Report, March 2019](#))**
- **BVRLA members operating at airports across the UK experienced a fall in revenues of up to 90% during the height of the pandemic.**
- **Vehicle rental firms remained under extreme pressure until airport passengers and international visitors were welcomed. Without renewed support otherwise viable firms' operations were severely impacted and jobs were put at risk.**
- **The vehicle rental sector was overlooked for allocation of financial support for airports during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Recovery of the UK aviation sector

Vehicle rental at airports

Vehicle rental is a vital part of the airport transport ecosystem, connecting passengers with their final or next destination. This is even more essential in rural airports where the public transport system is not as advanced.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there has been explicit support for the airports sector but unfortunately not for the vehicle rental operators who rely on airports for their business. Regrettably, BVRLA members operating at airports across the UK experienced a fall in revenues of up to 90%. Our members took operational measures to reduce costs and resources whilst maintaining their long-term capabilities in anticipation of

when improved market conditions would return. Thankfully most branches managed to survive during the pandemic, but many viable firms were severely impacted and jobs were threatened as a result of a lack of support or understanding of the sector by central government.

The BVRLA invited the Aviation Minister to meet and discuss these concerns earlier this year but the invitation was not taken up and the Department for Transport continued to omit the rental vehicle sector when discussing the impact of the pandemic and necessary support measures for the aviation industry.

Now travel restrictions are lifting (in particular the recent rebound in US travel is welcome), business has started to return for the sector, but this recovery is very fragile. If travel restrictions were to return in the near future there is no guarantee the rental sector would be able to weather the storm once again.

Sustainability - Supporting the Government's aim to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050

As previously explained, the vehicle rental sector forms part of a complex transport ecosystem at airports. These locations should be viewed as transport hubs for rail, buses, coaches and rental as well as aviation. It is therefore vital that decarbonisation efforts being undertaken consider the whole ecosystem, not just airlines and the physical airport building.

Rental companies seeking to embrace zero emission vehicles require specific attention at airport locations. The cost of installing charging infrastructure is high, especially if that business is expected to cover the whole cost by itself. There are also potential future complications regarding ownership of this infrastructure. If a rental company has paid for the installation of charging infrastructure but then is moved from that location within a few years the infrastructure is not something they can take with them.

Airports must have an open dialogue with rental companies and be willing to work in collaboration to ensure progress towards zero emission motoring as the onwards transport step for air passengers is fully supported and incorporated into their overarching decarbonisation plans.

About the BVRLA

- The BVRLA represents over 970 companies engaged in vehicle rental, leasing and fleet management. Our membership is responsible for a combined fleet of four million cars, vans and trucks – one-in-ten of all vehicles on UK roads.
- BVRLA members represent the demand-side of the automotive industry, buying around 50% of new vehicles, including over 80% of those manufactured and sold in the UK. In doing so, they support almost 500,000 jobs, add £7.6bn in tax revenues and contribute £49bn to the UK economy each year.
- Together with our members, the association works with policymakers, public sector agencies, regulators, and other key stakeholders to ensure that road transport delivers environmental, social and economic benefits to everyone. BVRLA members are leading the charge to decarbonise road transport and are set to register 400,000 new battery electric cars and vans per year by 2025.
- BVRLA membership provides customers with the reassurance that the company they are dealing with adheres to the highest standards of professionalism and fairness.
- The association achieves this by reinforcing industry standards and regulatory compliance via its mandatory Codes of Conduct, inspection regime, government-approved Alternative Dispute Resolution service and an extensive range of learning and development programmes.

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