

GOING LOW

Bringing the first Euro VI Eonic tractor unit into operation involved a year's work from the customer, fresh food supplier Reynolds, asset finance firm Ryder - which owns the vehicle - and manufacturer Mercedes-Benz

Some 65 Reynolds trucks a night provide multi-drop deliveries to restaurants, hotels, care homes, gyms and other facilities in London - whose roads from are now ruled by the ULEZ, which came in at the beginning of the month, and where TfL's Direct Vision standards governing the sight lines on truck cabs are due to come into force in October 2020.

To keep up with this quickly evolving situation, Reynolds has invested in new technology, particularly the Mercedes-Benz Eonic. (And an all-electric Eonic 26t rigid conversion by Electra Commercial Vehicles was due to be delivered last month.)

Although the truck's cab design complies with Direct Vision requirements, it wasn't quite right for the operator's needs. First, payload

was limited to 16 pallets. Second, the Allison automatic gearbox installed on the Eonic, optimised for low-speed duty appropriate to rubbish collection, didn't fit the multi-drop model in terms of fuel performance.

Both issues are now being addressed with the new tractor, which was specified for one of the night drop runs to London at up to 28t gwv (but plated at 31t). First, it tows an 11m-long Gray & Adams urban trailer, capacity 20 pallets. Second, early estimates (after some 10 weeks of operation) suggest a fuel economy double that of the Eonic rigid, thanks to a Mercedes-Benz Powershift 3 12-speed automated transmission with 14.93:1 gear ratio. The tractor is powered by a 348bhp OM936 diesel, fed by 200-litre fuel tanks, enlarged compared to the rigid. That powertrain offers a backhaul capability.



CITY LOOKING

Essex-based crane hire business City Lifting has become the first UK operator to put a Scania L-series low-entry truck into service. The vehicle is a 26-tonne gwv L 280 6x2 rigid, with a flatbed body and a Palfinger PK19.001 SLD 5 18.5-tonne-metre loader crane, and it is being used as a support truck for the operator's London crane fleet. The 'City Safe' factory-fitted optional lower window in the passenger door - available on the new generation P and L series - means the vehicle achieves a five-star Direct Vision standard rating.

As is perhaps inevitable with a first-of-a-kind unit, there were compromises on the way. As its chassis is adapted from a rigid, the tractor's 3.9m wheelbase was longer than Reynolds wanted, so an unsightly 'cab gap' remains between back of tractor and front of trailer, even with a Fontaine sliding fifth wheel assembly (since then, Mercedes-Benz has added a 3.45m-wheelbase option). Second was the time it took: a project hoped by Reynolds to last a few months took a year.

Its partner was finance and rental provider Ryder, which is leasing the tractor to Reynolds on a seven-year deal. Area sales manager Paul Eve admits that estimating a resale value at the end of that time was difficult, but he remains confident. Restricted emissions zones are sweeping across the country, and the truck's mileage is contractually limited to 60,000 miles per year. He refers to the project as a "milestone", and adds: "Because we do this product, it lays a foundation. It has helped us establish what we can do." [TE](#)

