



Toyota Goes Up To Oxford

20 June 2001

The latest in MPVs is on its way to Britain's oldest university. The Toyota Previa has been selected as the University of Oxford's VIP carrier after beating five other people-carriers on performance and by more than £2,000 on whole-life costs.

The university uses a pool of around 30 cars and as many light commercial vehicles to meet its various requirements. It had previously used two Volvo saloons to carry out VIP duties but it was felt that a single MPV could provide more flexibility, combined with significant cost savings.

The Previa CDX, finished like other vehicles in the fleet in the equivalent of Oxford blue, was purchased from local dealer Inchcape Oxford. The first Toyota in the fleet, it will now be used to convey senior officials and academics to meetings, and other special guests visiting the university. When not engaged on these duties, it may also be used by the university police force, and is expected to average about 12,000 miles a year.

The Previa was chosen by the University Marshal, Richard Hartley, whose responsibilities include overseeing the university's security service and its police unit as well as the management of VIP vehicles. "We required a vehicle that would give us more operational flexibility, for instance on regular trips to London when parties of five or more university officials visit Government departments or other organisations," he says.

"The Previa offered flexibility of space and economies of scale, as we need only one vehicle and driver rather than two. We wanted an automatic transmission to cope

with the London driving environment, and a vehicle that would give us performance, economy and a high level of comfort for the driver and passengers."

As might be expected at Oxford, the selection process was rigorous. Six vehicles were evaluated, including equivalent MPVs from Ford, Renault, Chrysler, VW and SEAT. Each was tested for a day in a variety of driving environments, and whole-life cost comparisons carried out. "The Previa came out on top. It was the best value in terms of the options we purchased – and we have to be conscious that we are spending public money."

The Toyota Previa was demonstrated to offer savings of more than £2,000 in whole-life costs against its competitors.

"Toyota Fleet has been really helpful," says Richard Hartley, adding that if the Previa works out well, other Toyota vehicles might be considered for the fleet.

ENDS