



## Weekend roadtest: Vauxhall Vivaro Life MPV

Published: 3rd August 2019

Author: Robin Roberts

Online version: <https://www.wheelswithinwales.uk/weekend-roadtest-vauxhall-vivaro-life-mpv/>



At a time when every motor manufacturer is rushing to produce popular crossover and SUV models, Vauxhall has delivered something different, in the shape of the Vivaro Life.

Clearly a derivative of its acclaimed and award-winning van but using parts from parent PSA to soften its character, the Vivaro Life is a genuinely large seven-seater ranking in practicality alongside Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz MPVs.

As such it's almost certain to become a very good alternative to its more established rivals snapped up by private hire businesses for airport runs and VIP transport. Social groups and



large families are also likely to be attracted if they need room for both people and luggage without the need for a small trailer.



There is a small family of models in the Vivaro Life line with petrol or diesel engines but only one automatic in with the most powerful 180ps engine, and we tested the Elite long with its 150ps 2.0 litre turbo-diesel engine and using a six-speed manual gearbox.

The first thing which strikes you about the Vivaro Life is its size. This is no shrinking violet of an SUV, it's in your face when you walk up to it and opening the door you have to step up quite a way to the driving or passenger seats.



Sitting a good bit higher than most other suvs or mpvs, you see the interior stretching a long way back over the middle and third row seats in the two-two-three configuration, and behind them is a truly enormous luggage space. That can be dramatically increased by gradually folding some or all of the five back seats.

The two hinged front doors and twin sliders are matched with a very wide and some might find too-high lifting fifth door. All open very wide to make access or unloading very easy.

The big and generously padded seats are very comfortable and have excellent adjustment ranges, with the front pair also getting folding armrests, electrical adjustment, heating and massage functions for ultimate comfort on a long journey. It was one of the most comfortable seating arrangements I have encountered on any car in recent years.

Add to these the Vivaro Life's extremely smooth, absorbent springing and shock absorbers and you have a very refined mpv which has almost completely shaken off its van origins.

I say almost because, comfortable as it was, the Vivaro Life did irritate with its very poor turning circle. It was not so much Life as lethargic when it came to parking or slowly manoeuvring, and thankfully the power steering was there to ease the effort.



You can see very well with low waistline and big windows throughout but you really need the reversing camera and sensors for those out of sight objects lurking to dent your vehicle and insurance premium. Lights and wipers were very good.

The comparatively modest 150ps 2.0 litre diesel engine is a workhorse which is best when tickled a bit with the gear-lever as it tends to reach maximum power very quickly and then needs another ratio to keep charging along, particularly when you load it. It's a narrow gate and easy to miss-select a ratio.

The need to constantly change gear on a cross-country journey did hit our fuel economy and we returned just under 35mg overall, but it did not improve much even at a steady 60mph





on motorways.

It's a big mpv and the room inside is extremely good for seven once you wiggle past the middle pair of seats, which swivelled on our test car, head and shoulder room is very generous



indeed and it has good heating and ventilation throughout, with privacy blinds and glass on the sides and rear, and there are twin sunroofs.

The oddments room for seven is a different matter. There is virtually nowhere to store items if you are sitting in the back row, those in the middle can share a very clever optional folding central box-cum-worksurface and the front seats are served by long door bins which are actually too low to reach most of the time, fascia bin, glovebox and top compartment with a very slim and poorly shaped recess ahead of the gearlever which allowed items to simply roll out when moving.



The occupants would not roll out of their seats however as the Vivaro did corner quite well and could be encouraged along at a fair pace with modest lean and a tendency to run wide on tighter turns but quickly came back on line as you eased off the throttle or unwound the steering.

I liked the ease of the major controls and their positioning was ideal, the stalks all had a positive feel but the cruise and radar control was out of direct sight.

Instruments were straightforward either side of a multi display for vehicle settings and readouts. There is a head-up display for the driver and Multimedia Navi Pro satnav with connectivity and voice control, cruise and speed limiter and automatic parking heater.



Noise levels were generally low and the Vivaro must be well insulated as road and engine noises barely intruded.

Which all meant it sounded, felt and performed like a car, not a van, except for that turning circle. If you are in the market for a genuine load lugger, want



comfort and versatility, the Vivaro Life is a breath of fresh air but is expensive with its over £40,000 price attracting high road tax costs for five years.

---

#### FAST FACTS

Vivaro Life Elite Long 2.0 s/s

---

Price: £42,4420 (as tested £45,310)

Mechanical: 150ps 4cyl 2.0 litre TD front wheel drive

---

Max Speed: 105mph

0-62mph: 12 sec

---

Combined MPG: 34.7

Insurance Group: 25E

---

C02 emissions: 152g/km

Bik rating: 37%, £855FY, £455x5SR

---

Warranty: 3yrs/ 60,000 miles

Sizes: L5.31m, W1.92m, H1.93m



wheels within wales  
putting *you* in the driving seat

[www.wheelswithinwales.uk](http://www.wheelswithinwales.uk)

---

---

Bootspace: 3m<sup>3</sup>

Kerb: 1968kg

---

**For:** Roomy, comfortable, versatility, ride, quiet

**Against:** Turning circle, modest oddments space, mediocre economy and no auto transmission for now on this engine.

© *WheelsWithinWales*