New car sales figures plunge for November…

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Best selling car in Britain for November and for the whole of 2017 so far has been Ford's Fiesta.

Robin Roberts reports on the latest falls in car sales numbers…

Diesel sales have collapsed 30% in Britain as the new car market contracted by over 11% last month, said the car-makers' body.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders reported a rise to over 33% for

alternatively fuelled vehicles and a 5% increase in petrol engined models.

The big switch from diesel to alternative fuel comes amid growing concerns over diesel emissions and impending higher charges, accelerated by the Budget plan to add significant costs to diesel registrations.

The drop will put pressure on the used car market as well and some dealers will be heavily discounting both new and used diesels to move them off forecourts.

The Government's new higher tax from April will affect the sales over coming months as it's a quiet time of year anyway and canny buyers will delay purchases as long as possible in the hope of getting a lower price for their new model.

The outcome might also impact on the end of contract price for models acquired under personal contract plans and mean owners will simply walk away from a new agreement and move towards traditional hire purchase or take out a new pcp with competitors.

Figures today from the SMMT showed November registrations were 163,541 compared with 184,101 last year, and diesels have fallen from 48.3% in November 2016 to 37.7% last month.

The rolling figure for this year marks a 16.1% decline in diesel over 11 months while AFVs have risen 34.6% over the same period.

The only growth area was specialist sports cars while executive and small car sectors declined and even superminis dipped.

The current sales are now at pre-crash level of 2007.

Concerns expressed by the Bank of England that there may be an interest rates rise and tightening of credit controls are also impacting on showroom footfall.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said, “An eighth month of decline in the new car market is a major concern, with falling business and consumer confidence exacerbated by on-going anti-diesel messages from government.”

He criticised the Government for its backward step in taxing new diesels and discouraging the move to cleaner engines to replace older more polluting ones.

November top ten:

Fiesta, Golf, MINI, Focus, Qashqai, BMW 1 Series, MB A Class, Sportage, MB C Class and Kuga.