New Vauxhall Crossland X sub-compact SUV First Impressions

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Vauxhall's latest is the Crossland X SUV

Assessed by Robin Roberts (Miles Better News Agency).

Size really matters in the burgeoning SUV sector and the new era of sub-compact models is being joined by the Vauxhall Crossland X.

It's shorter and lower than the sibling Mokka X AWD and close to the Astra Hatch but it features an elevated seating position and a user-friendly interior to the front-wheel-drive only platform. It replaces Vauxhall's Meriva range.

There’s a familiar look to the front of Crossland with the Adam-inspired ‘floating roof’ and at the rear a skid-plate is visible.



Crossland X is the latest to get standard Vauxhall OnStar comprehensive assistance connectivity with wireless charging, plus IntelliLink infotainment to work with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto all via a big touchscreen.

Front seats have been given a lot of attention to maximise comfort and those in the back sit higher than the front pair and except in base models can adjust legroom in their 60/40 split seats with minimum 410 to maximum 1,255-litres (14.48 to 44.32 cu.ft) of loadspace utilising a double-deck floor.

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Interior design points major controls & displays towards the driver, and available features include head-up display, adaptive full LED beams, 180-degree rear camera, advanced park assist, pedestrian collision alert, lane departure, drowsiness and blind-spot alerts, together with speed sign recognition and speed limiter equipped cruise control.



UK is the biggest market in Europe for the Mokka X and Vauxhall believe the more compact Crossland X will have particularly strong appeal to those living and driving in built-up urban areas so there is a strong emphasis on being able to clearly see around and safely park. It will jointly appeal to young families and older people who want easy access and room.

The five-seater Crossland X will be joined early next year by the larger Grandland X as Vauxhall ramp up their presence in the fastest growing sector of UK and European sales.

Initially there will be about 26 models in the Crossland X range, based on three trim levels with technical refinements, powered by a choice of 81, 110 or 130 hp petrol 1.2 litre, three cylinder engines or 99 and 120 hp four cylinder 1.6 diesels using five or six speed manual boxes or six speed sequential automatic transmission. Prices rise from £16,555 to £21,380.

Vauxhall SUV brand manager Sean Freeman said they had enjoyed a record first quarter this year, and with the arrival of Crossland after Insignia, and the impending addition of Insignia ST, with the Grandland X to follow, they were very confident of the year ahead despite industry talk of a slow-down.

“It’s been our best year for sales since 2011 and Vauxhall has done better than Opel in Germany and we know we have great models to come.”

Sales in the Crossland’s B-sector have more than doubled in three years, 65% of models are bought privately and, looking at the Vauxhall SUV range, he added that it was likely to account for 20% of a dealership’s sales in a few years.

Turning to the naming of the Crossland X, he denied it was a confusing suffix as the car only has front wheel drive. “The X doesn’t refer to its traction as four-wheel-drive but rather it identifies it as a model which offers extra in terms of room or features over a hatchback or estate,” he said.

The Crossland X is developed from a PSA Peugeot Citroen platform and the Grandland X will be from another larger PSA platform, but both were developed before the agreement in March that the French car giant would buy the Vauxhall-Opel pairing from General Motors. Vauxhall LCVs have been developed with PSA LCVS for a number of years, so the connections have a long history before this year’s purchase.

He said that Vauxhall anticipated 65% of Crossland X orders would be for petrol models led by private sales and the 110 hp 1.2 in SE trim is likely to be the best seller of all specifications, and this mid-range trim is likely to account for half of orders across all engine types. It’s built in Spain.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

This new generation of sub-compact SUV has been designed from the inside out to maximise space and practicality and wrap it all in an eye-catching body.

We liked the big opening doors, low loading double-deck bootspace and reach-adjustable rear seats, there’s a higher riding position in the front as well and you get good all round vision, helped by the reversing camera and sensors on most models.

Technophiles will appreciate its big touch-screen and infotainment system, its climate system and easy to drive character.

It’s not demanding of a driver, but it’s not very rewarding either, except for economy potential, and for us the best was the most powerful 130 hp petrol version we tested.

The six-speed gearbox is a good match for the 1.2 triple-pot power-plant with excellent ratios to optimise output, and a precise linkage, with adequate brakes and sharp steering.

We saw an indicated 37.1 mpg with the 130 hp unit and this was plenty of power for what could be a regularly-used four-seater family car.

I am not so sure you’d be as satisfied with running the slightly less powerful 110 hp version, because it needed to be stirred along through its five gears, with a clunky feel and sound to the changes. In addition, a fault on the test car meant the trip meter was inoperative, but a colleague told me he achieved about 47 mpg as a guide.

A short time with the 99 hp 1.6 diesel saw the best economy at 54 mpg and for the purely economy minded this has to be the best of the bunch, but its lack of power was noticeable and again I wouldn’t recommend the five speed box. It’s probably the model you’ll see on hire and courtesy car fleets which don’t buy the even less powerful 81 hp petrol version.

VERDICT

Size, and by that I mean power output, matters a lot in the Vauxhall Crossland X so pick your model very carefully.

For: Good leg and headroom, fairly comfortable, versatile seating and loading configurations, well-equipped, strong brakes and positive steering.

Against: Gearbox ratios not ideal for performance, road and mechanical noises, little space around lever-type handbrake.



Milestones and Wheels-Alive Tech. Spec. in Brief:

Vauxhall Crossland X 1.2 Turbo 110 ecoTec SE Nav (likely best selling model).

Price: £18,575.

Engine/transmission: 1.2 litre, three cylinder, 110 hp turbo-petrol engine, five speed manual, front wheel drive.

Performance: 117 mph, 0–62mph 10.6 seconds.

Fuel consumption: Combined Cycle 58.9 mpg (47 mpg estimated on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 emissions 109 g/km, VED road tax £140, BiK company car tax rating 20%.

Insurance Group: 13E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.22 m (13.84 ft), W 1.83 m (6.00 ft), H 1.60 m (5.25 ft), Kerb weight: 1,245 kg (2,745 lb), bootspace: 410 – 1,255 litres (14.48 to 44.32 cu.ft).