Toyota HiLux Invincible X Double Cab pick-up – Road Test

Published: December 5, 2022

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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/toyota-hilux-invincible-x-double-cab-pick-up-road-test/



The Toyota HiLux Invincible X Double Cab pick-up…

…put through its paces by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News

Agency).

*Additional late news – Prototype hydrogen fuel cell powered HiLux to be developed in the UK (see information just released at the end of this road test).

For thousands of users, the Toyota HiLux pick-up is the golden oldie but 50 years after it hit British tracks, trails and tarmac it's definitely less of the oldie and actually a very up to date model.

Toyota keep updating but not altering the sound basics of their beloved and highly popular pick-up. With five models to choose it now has the strongest appeal to those who want a workhorse or a weekend getaway for those with an active lifestyle. It comes with a choice of 2.4 or, as we tested, a 2.8 litre four-cylinder diesel engine, selectable 2 or 4WD and three cab styles plus a chassis cab. On-the-road prices including Vat and VED range from £31,135 to £68,233. Our test drive version is priced at £37,128.

HiLux first appeared in Britain in 1972 and there are currently over 180,600 on and off the country's roads with sales exceeding 9,560 last year. For the newcomer, Toyota engineers have worked miracles under the platform to really transform its ride.

Although still utilising rear leaf springs to take heavy loads, their shape, length and mountings have been carefully re-engineered to reduce firmness and skipping around badly surfaced bends while sensors determine pitch and dip and adjust throttle responses instantly to take the sharpness out of the natural leaning.

You really have to experience the transformation which has made the Toyota Hilux Double Cab pick-up behave more like a large SUV.

So, is it a car or a pick-up, the question is maybe puzzling but so is the answer, depending on your legal advice. HMRC regard double row seats as mainly passenger use and DVLA have a different opinion, and then it depends on the loadbed weight capacity, under or over a tonne and with or without a cab cover. Get good legal or accountancy advice before you

plunge into the purchase, and we have used Toyota's interpretation in our technical panel costing for BIK company car tax rates.

This latest version of the venerable 2.8 litre diesel engine is a solid performer where it's needed and now comes with some very clever fuel saving features which we can verify will take it to about 32 mpg over a mixture of roads. Being a big four pot diesel means it is not as quiet as a petrol unit, particularly when working hard in the lower gears, but it has good mid-range torque for heavy work and towing.



Switching between the Eco or Power mode, push-buttons on the transmission tunnel will optimise operations, without reducing ability to do its job in any situation, and the smooth changing six-speed gearbox is delightful to use even if the clutch is both heavy and has a

long travel.


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PHONE
SETUP
TUNE SCROLL
HOME
MENU
AUDIO
MAP
POWER VOLUME
JBL
TEMP
22.5
22.5
TEMP
DUAL
A/C
AUTO
OFF
ECO
PWR

Steering gave good feedback despite needing a lot of arm twirling to manoeuvre in tight spaces, so its power assistance was very welcome and it did not suffer from vibration or kickback at speed or on rough tracks.

Underfoot, the brakes easily and quickly contained speed and the traditional wired handbrake – an increasing rarity these days – held it on our regular test slope.

Secondary controls for lights and washers/ wipers were on simple stalks either side of the column with the cruise controls on a third stick under the washer/ wipers lever.

Infotainment and vehicle settings buttons were grouped on the steering wheel spokes and were sensibly marked and of good sizes for immediate recognition.



More switches were grouped on the lower off-side of the fascia and also spread over the lower edge of the central console where they were not so easy to locate if you wanted to turn on the heat seating, for example.

The eight-inch infotainment screen is a multi-purpose display with good chunky buttons either side and touch function for features. It works well and was clear to read. There are also power points infront for 220v and 2x12v accessories alongside a single not too easy to use USB port, but nothing for those behind. Useful to have a cooled upper glovebox though and Toyota Touch2 works with mobile phones of either persuasion.

There are lots of oddments spaces throughout, with big door bins front and back, console trays and bin.

Access is a climb up even for a taller user and our model came with a handy step and grab handle, but once inside the room was very good all round and even the back seat passengers were not crammed in three abreast.



Using the loadbed meant dropping the heavy tailgate and pushing back the long roller cover, which thankfully had a long leash to pull it back over anything, but it’s a high lift and the tailgate needs strength to close, as does the bonnet to open and prop up.


TOYOTA

Inside, the Toyota Hilux is a very comfortable pick-up with big, supportive seats, good adjustment on the front pair and clear views to front and side but over the shoulder manoeuvring is more of a challenge and the driver really depends on the 360-degree camera and all round sensors. Bright headlights and big washers/ wipers were appreciated on some autumn mornings and evenings.

The interior is practically trimmed with few frills, but that makes it very hard wearing if a bit boring to look at. However, the room and comfort put it on par with a bigger SUV, and the Toyota's 4WD ability to go anywhere and importantly, back again, mean it is a much more practical proposition for some users heading off road.

On or off road its handling was faithful and trusted, without drama or disappointment. Good approach and departure angles as well as tall ground clearance combined with that 4WD transmission meant little would defeat it.

This slideshow requires JavaScript.

VERDICT

Tough, dependable, with excellent load-carrying and towing abilities – and now with significantly improved rear suspension and dynamic qualities, the HiLux is very much a force to be reckoned with in today's double cab pick-up market.

For: Very solid feel to build quality, excellent access and lots of room for five people, fairly good economy, nice transmission with high ground clearance for serious off-road work with very long warranty, renowned durability record.

Against: Thick pillars and high loadbed restrict vision, slow from standstill, some engine noise at higher revs, heavy bonnet and tailgate.



FAST FACTS

Toyota HiLux Invincible X Double Cab

Price: £37,128

Mechanical: 201 bhp 4 cyl 2.8 litre turbo-diesel, 6 sp manual, 2/4WD with drive mode selection

Max Speed: 109 mph

0 – 62mph: 10.13 sec

Combined MPG: 32

Insurance Group: 45D

CO2 emissions: 222 g/km

Bik rating company car tax rating: *£720 or £1,440 pa depending on 20/40% personal tax levy*

VED commercial vehicle road tax: *£265*

Warranty: 10 years/ 100,000 miles

Size: L 5.33 m (17.49 ft), W 1.90 m (6.23 ft), H 1.82 m (5.97 ft)

Payload: 1,015 kg (2,238 lb), towing up to 3.5 tonnes

Kerbweight: 2,335 kg (5,148 lb)

*Hydrogen fuel cell powered HiLux prototype being developed in the UK



Toyota is leading a consortium to develop a prototype hydrogen fuel cell-powered version of its world-famous Hilux pick-up at the company's UK vehicle plant in Burnaston, Derbyshire. Toyota Motor Manufacturing UK (TMUK) has successfully secured UK Government funding for the project through the Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC), an organisation supporting the development of cleaner technologies and new mobility concepts.

This new opportunity to bring zero emission technology to the commercial vehicle market reflects evolving customer demand and Toyota's 360-degree approach to sustainable mobility across all sectors. The APC funding will enable TMUK to develop hydrogen technologies for this specific vehicle market segment during the next three years.