Vauxhall Crossland X Ultimate 130 hp – Road Test

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More power, more appeal – Vauxhall's latest Crossland X Ultimate 130 hp...

...assessed by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

With a third of all new European car sales going to the SUV market it's a sector no car-maker can ignore, and Vauxhall is going for it big and small time with its new models.

The Crossland X was introduced as an urban compact five door SUV with front wheel drive only, and with a low waistline and big windows to help navigate town traffic. Its luggage

capacity is more than available in a hatchback but not as much as in its stablemate Mokka X SUV.

So it's a compromise is some ways but that's not to decry its ability to fulfill a multitude of rolls as a family carryall.

We tested the less powerful 110 hp model last year and have updated our records with this 130 hp version of the stalwart three cylinder 1.2 litre PureTech petrol engine now being shared between its creators – the PSA Group and the UK arm of GM which the French parent bought out.

There is a 20-strong range in four trim levels, with a choice of three-output 1.2 petrol engines and one diesel, all with a common five-door SUV styled body. Our model came with a versatility pack, parking assistance, winter pack and premium paint, which together increased the price by £2,005.

The added, if modest power increase, to 130 hp gives the Crossland X a useful turn of speed in urban traffic and makes it more relaxing on longer journeys, particularly cruising motorways. It also means you don't have to work the six-speed gearbox as hard to maintain progress and that's good for the overall economy and refinement.

We nudged 40 mpg at times and settled with a little less after a week's motoring, and while it went well, the noise level from the triple-pot engine did intrude through the intermediate gears and higher revs.

Thankfully, the willingness of the engine, its long but progressive clutch action and the gearchange itself, allied with the well balanced steering, made easy work of any journey.

It steered accurately and stopped sharply with a good brake for hill starts but it was not the most ergonomically design grip.

I generally liked the seats which did a good job at cushioning the hard springing I

experienced, and located occupants as it skipped around bends and never really embraced the surface.

The optional versatility pack includes greater adjustment on the back three seats and is to be recommended for families in particular, as the potential added legroom and carrying arrangements are a real advantage with their 40/20/40 layout.

Secondary controls were the usual stalks and a few fascia switches, which worked well and were convenient, but much is now channeled through the big infotainment screen on the centre of the dash and that can be difficult to use with its sequential selection and sometimes unclear display in certain lighting conditions. It also gets a useful head-up display for speed.

Oddments room was good throughout and the bootspace a sensibly shaped space for bigger

items.

I liked the heating and ventilation settings, directional control and output for a car which is about the same size inside as the Peugeot 2008 platform upon which it’s based.

The visibility is generally good as I wrote above but like so many in the SUV sector the high tail can hide people, posts and other things when reversing and you need sensors and a camera as a matter of course. Forward vision was good with bright, long-range wide-spread LED beams and big wipers.

VERDICT

The Vauxhall Crossland X has a place in the range but I wonder how long it will continue as part of a parent Group bulging with products which are probably its closest rivals.

If it keeps selling well there is every chance it will continue and with the current boom in SUV business it can justify its existence on grounds of value and versatility.

For: Roomy, practical, good access and reasonable economy, responsive engine and light major controls, head-up display and good equipment level at the price.

Against: Stiff ride, lots of road noise and engine note intruded at speed, rear vision

obscured, excessive plastic finishes, ungenerous warranty.

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

Vauxhall Crossland X Ultimate, 1.2T, 130 hp, manual five door compact SUV.

Price: £22,800 (as tested £24,805).

Mechanical: 130 hp, 230 Nm (170 lb.ft), three cylinder 1,200cc, turbo petrol, six speed manual, 2WD.

Performance: 125 mph, 0–62mph 9.9 seconds.

Fuel consumption: WLTP compliant Combined Cycle 55.4 mpg (38.7 mpg on test).

Emissions and taxation: CO2 117 g/km, VED road tax £160/£140, BiK company car tax rating 24%.

Insurance Group: 18E.

Warranty: Three years/60,000 miles.

Dimensions/capacities: L 4.22 m (13.85 ft), W 1.77 (5.81 ft) m, H 1.61 m (5.28 ft), boot space 410 – 1,255 litres (14.48 – 44.32 cu.ft), kerb weight 1,225 kg (2,767 lb), five doors/five seats.