

Hydrogen Car Hits the Streets of Birmingham's Campus

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A zero-emission, environmentally friendly car powered by hydrogen has arrived on the University of Birmingham's campus as part of the Science City Hydrogen energy project to discover how hydrogen powered cars might replace diesel and petrol vehicles and also create jobs in the region.

The hydrogen car will be part of a fleet of five cars which will replace some of the University's own fleet of vehicles so that engineering researchers can learn more about their efficiency and cost effectiveness.

New technologies such as this often face uncertainties at the commercialisation stage and they can also have a higher initial cost. Until they become more competitive on cost, it is difficult to put these new technologies into production on a larger scale. Professor Kevin Kendall, lead investigator from the Department of Chemical Engineering, is hoping to combat this problem and says, 'By comparing the hydrogen powered vehicles directly with the University's petrol and diesel fleet, we can find out how vehicles will need to be adapted in order to make hydrogen an attractive and cost effective option as a future fuel.'

'Once we have gathered enough information about the viability of hydrogen powered cars, we will be working alongside Birmingham City Council to establish whether a hydrogen powered fleet would be practicable for their waste, transport and other vehicles and how this transition could be managed.'

'In terms of the manufacture of these new vehicles we will also be looking at how we can develop a supply chain of companies and create jobs in the region as the hydrogen economy begins to take shape.'

As a direct result of this research, it is hoped that the public sector will start to buy into these new technologies, providing support to companies moving from the technology demonstration phase into the early stages of commercialisation.

This research is part of the Hydrogen Energy Project which has received funding of £6.3 million from Regional Development Agency Advantage West Midlands to develop the use of hydrogen energy as a green fuel and is part of the overall Birmingham Science City initiative.

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The car can cover 100 miles on a full tank of hydrogen and is virtually silent.
2. The 4th National Science Cities Summit takes place in Birmingham on 15th and 16th November at the ICC and Millennium Point. Birmingham Science City represents a widely drawn partnership of industry, education and the public sector. It is driven by Advantage West Midlands working in close partnership with Birmingham City Council and neighboring local authorities, Government Office for the West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. By building on the region's track record of innovation and its knowledge base; by bringing partners together through the projects we support and all our communication, we aim to promote the value of science and innovation in making people's lives better.

For more information on Birmingham Science City, its partners and projects please contact Alison Rowan, Press & Media Relations Manager on 07876 218166 or by email on a.rowan@warwick.ac.uk.

3. The research is being led by the University of Birmingham Fuel Cells Group: Professor Kevin Kendall, Dr Waldemar Bujalski and Dr Bruno Pollet.

For further information

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