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Greener motoring showcase opens in Birmingham

The most important exhibition of greener motoring takes place this week at the National Motorcycle Museum in Birmingham.

The two-day exhibition of vehicles and technologies has been organised by SMMT and will run alongside the Environmentally Friendly Vehicle Conference. The conference is part of the UK presidency of G8 and the EU, and will be chaired by transport secretary, Alistair Darling MP. Around 200 international delegates are expected to attend, exploring how policy makers and industry can develop markets for cleaner vehicles.

The exhibition will showcase the investment made by the motor industry in the drive to sustainable motoring. It includes a selection of alternative-fuelled models, like the Toyota Prius petrol-electric hybrid and Volvo's V70 bi-fuel CNG car. Volkswagen will showcase their fuel-cell and hybrid Tourans, and a synthetic-fuelled Skoda Fabia, with BMW showing a 7 Series capable of running on hydrogen and petrol. There will also be a Lotus Elise sports car which runs on natural gas.

SMMT chief executive, Christopher Macgowan, will chair one of the conference sessions. Commenting on the exhibition he said, 'This is an opportunity to see first hand the tangible output from research and development towards sustainable motoring. But it is important that we don't lose sight of the progress we are making in cutting emissions and reducing energy consumption from manufacturing sites. We are also very proud to be leading Europe in providing more information to car buyers about the environmental impact of their choice of vehicle, at the point of sale.'

Working with the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership, manufacturers developed Europe's first colour-coded label for new cars. It follows the familiar format applied to white goods and links CO2 information with average annual running costs. The labels are now widely displayed in showrooms across the UK and representatives of the LowCVP will be on hand to talk about this important cross-stakeholder initiative.

SMMT's sixth annual sustainability report was published last month. The report shows that in the last four years, improvements have been seen across UK manufacturing sites.

Energy used to produce each vehicle is down by 42 per cent and the amount of waste sent to landfill has reduced by 70.2 per cent.