

Cardiff sees first electric bus take charge

Today, speculation will end as it is put to use when Cardiff welcomes its first electric bus into the city.

Running as part of an eight-week trial, the state-of-the-art Volvo 7900E will run along the regular Route 6, taking passengers from the civic centre, via the city centre and on to the scenic Cardiff Bay.

The project is being run in collaboration between the Welsh Government, Cardiff Council, Cardiff Bus, Volvo (the suppliers of the bus) and ABB who have provided the charging station. Both Volvo Bus and ABB will be bearing the costs of the vehicle, the infrastructure, its transport and commissioning and the fuel for the generator.

This trial's key objective is to prove an electric vehicle can operate using opportunity charging on an allocated route and that the infrastructure can be installed in Cardiff and other Welsh cities, potentially to be rolled out on a wider scale.

The aims of the trial are to provide evidence that the introduction of electric vehicles in Wales can provide both financial and environmental benefits, and that the vehicle can complete the route with no disturbance to the schedule.

Economy and Transport Secretary Ken Skates said:

"I am delighted to welcome Volvo and ABB to Cardiff, and grateful to Cardiff Bus for taking the lead in this exciting development in city transport.

"There have been a number of such trials around the UK, but this is the first in Wales. We have to stress test this demonstration project, and the late Bank Holiday weekend should be the ideal opportunity to put this vehicle through its paces.

"This is a first step towards our Economic Action Plan commitment to achieve zero carbon buses within ten years. I have every confidence the data will support the fact that electric vehicles can deliver a high-quality service, with measurable improvements in air quality along the participating route.

"Volvo brings its bus into Cardiff just in time to bring visitors to the Bay to welcome the Volvo Ocean Boat Race. This is the first time in a history spanning four decades that this thrilling event has stopped in Wales, and it is fitting we welcome the boat race and the bus to our city in the same week."

The Minister for Environment, Hannah Blythyn, said:

“Improving air quality is one of my top priorities. I’m delighted the Welsh Government and Cardiff Council are working with businesses to present innovative solutions to reduce vehicle pollution and improve air quality in our city centres. The new buses complement our recent consultation on Clean Air Zones which will aim to tackle excess levels of roadside nitrogen dioxide.”