

B-Roll, Pictures, and Filming Opportunities Available – call.

Strict Embargo: Not for use before 0.01hrs, Wednesday 11th February 2015.

UK's first driverless pod to be unveiled

A prototype driverless pod that will be the first autonomous vehicle in the UK to work on public footpaths, will be unveiled today by the Transport Systems Catapult at a Government launch event in Greenwich, London (11th February 2015).

The first 'LUTZ Pathfinder' pod will be revealed at the event by the Transport Systems Catapult, the UK's innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility. The electric-powered vehicles can seat two people and are designed to work on pavements and pedestrianized areas. They are being built by RDM Group, one of the UK's fastest growing advanced engineering companies, and will be equipped with sensor and navigation technology provided by the University of Oxford's Mobile Robotics Group.

Later this year, the pods will be tested in an "urban laboratory" using a route agreed with Milton Keynes Council, a key partner in the project. This will be the first time driverless vehicles have been used in an urban community setting, and they will be gradually introduced following a series of tests in a safe, controlled, environment.

Steve Yianni, chief executive of the Transport Systems Catapult, said:

"Technology such as driverless vehicles, intelligent phone apps, and social media, will transform how we travel in the future – making journeys safer, faster, and more connected."

"Through the LUTZ Pathfinder programme, the Transport Systems Catapult has pioneered the introduction of driverless pods in Milton Keynes and the first ever tests in the UK will take place later this year in a controlled public environment. The UK is at the forefront of this emerging new technology and poised to become the leading supplier of autonomous vehicles and systems around the world."

"Safety is a key benefit of driverless technology, which is particularly relevant given the global trends of an increasing and ageing population."

Neil Fulton, programme director at the Transport Systems Catapult, said:

"Safety is our number one priority and this is reflected in features ranging from pedestrian protection, low vehicle speed and large external radii to deformable panels, 19 electronic sensors/cameras and an emergency stop."

“The futuristic styling of the pod is dominated by a balanced roofline, wheels pushed back to the extremities of the chassis and doors that run virtually the entire side of the vehicle.”

The Transport Systems Catapult is the project lead for the LUTZ Pathfinder programme and also a partner in the £20M twin-city UK Autodrive project announced by the Chancellor in the 2014 Autumn Statement.

UK Autodrive will build on the success of the LUTZ Pathfinder programme – the design, performance, and learning from early tests – and scale this up to create a full city demonstrator that will eventually see public trials with a fleet of around 40 driverless pods using pedestrianized areas.

The pods are being built at RDM’s £400,000 advanced engineering centre in the heart of Coventry.

David Keene, CEO of RDM Group, said:

“We’ve created a robust and visually exciting prototype that showcases the best of British design and engineering. This contract will help us pass £10m in annual sales this year and has the potential to create a further five high value engineering jobs.”

Professor Paul Newman of Oxford University’s Mobile Robotics Group said:

“Oxford University have developed the technology that will enable these pods to understand the world around them and navigate autonomously. The pilot programme is a fabulous opportunity to explore pressing challenges in autonomous vehicle development: low cost and safe perception for vehicles which operate for and beside people in our cities.”

“This programme will further advance the UK’s position in autonomous vehicle research and we are thrilled to be part of it.”

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For further information or interviews contact:

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Notes to editors:

Filming Opportunities

Pre-filming with the LUTZ Pathfinder pod and interviews available (under embargo) in Milton Keynes on 9th and 10th February. Availability is limited – call.

Pictures

A selection of embargoed stills photographs of the pod taken by leading automotive photographer Simon Stuart Miller will be available as well as 3D stills images and working pod design images.

Interviews

Spokespeople from the project including engineers and scientists are available – call.

3D Animation

A short 3D film showing the LUTZ Pathfinder pods working in Milton Keynes is available (30-60 secs).

B-Roll and VNR

Broadcast footage of the pod being driven by controller and interviews with the CEO of the Transport Systems Catapult, engineers and scientists is available free and without restriction to all broadcasters via TNR's Online Press Office.

For more information please call TNR for details on 020 7963 7163.

B-Roll footage includes:

IV Steve Yianni, CEO Transport Systems Catapult

IV David Keene, CEO RDM Group

IV Transport Minister Claire Perry *TBC*

IV Business Secretary Vince Cable *TBC*

IV Professor Paul Newman, University of Oxford

GVs The pod in Milton Keynes being driven by controller

GVs Behind-the-scenes of the pod being developed

GVs Launch event in Greenwich, London.

3D Animation – showing how pods will work in future in Milton Keynes.

Driverless Pod Unveiling: Online Press Office

Online Press Office URL: <http://onlinepressoffice.tnrcommunications.co.uk/driverless-pods>

Password: transport

Site live from: 1200 GMT, Monday 9th February 2015

Media Materials embargoed: 001 GMT, Wednesday 11th February 2015

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About us:

LUTZ Pathfinder

Carried out on behalf of the UK Automotive Council and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, and sitting within the wider LUTZ (Low-carbon Urban Transport Zone) programme, the LUTZ Pathfinder programme is overseeing a trial of three autonomous pods in Milton Keynes and assessing their feasibility from both a technical and societal point of view.

Transport Systems Catapult

The Transport Systems Catapult is the UK's technology and innovation centre for Intelligent Mobility, harnessing emerging technologies to improve the movement of people and goods around the world. We are here to support business growth, increase the UK's share of the global Intelligent Mobility market, and attract investment – creating jobs and generating long-term economic growth.

The Transport Systems Catapult is one of an elite network of not-for-profit technology and innovation centres established and overseen by the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK. All Catapults obtain their funds from a combination of core Innovate UK support and competitively won business and public sector funding. In addition, the Transport Systems Catapult is receiving substantial funding from the UK's Department for Transport.

For more information, please visit www.ts.catapult.org.uk

Innovate UK

Innovate UK is the new name for the Technology Strategy Board – the UK's innovation agency. Taking a new idea to market is a challenge. Innovate UK funds, supports and connects innovative businesses through a unique mix of people and programmes to accelerate sustainable economic growth. For further information visit www.innovateuk.org.

RDM Group

RDM has supplied products and services to the car industry since 1993. It operates across three divisions – advanced engineering, autonomous vehicles and automotive – and has built a global reputation for integrating new technology into a host of applications.

From its Coventry facility, the company can offer access to electronics design and assembly, composite production, software development, niche vehicle build and an extensive interior trim department.

It has grown 20% year-on-year and recently received significant funding support from Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership in the fit out of its Advanced Engineering Centre.

Oxford University Mobile Robotics Group

The Oxford Mobile Robotics Group (MRG) is all about Mobile Autonomy. The group was founded in 2003 and is led by Professor Paul Newman and Professor Ingmar Posner. They research many aspects of mobile autonomy with a particular emphasis on navigation, perception and understanding of large workspaces.

For more information visit: <http://mrg.robots.ox.ac.uk>