



Press information

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MELLOR

STAND 919A, HALL 9

Mellor makes its first appearance at Busworld

Managing Director John Randerson reflects on Mellor's recent evolution from accessible minibus builder to a class leading manufacturer of small low floor buses.

“The key to our success has been two fold. Firstly, a team that has the vision to see what Mellor could be, given the opportunity to develop into the PSV sector and secondly; a board of directors that was prepared to back the plan, supporting the business ambitions” said John.

As Mellor’s Orion E, the world’s first fully electric low floor bus, takes centre stage at Busworld, he says it is the culmination of three years’ product planning for the Rochdale based bus manufacturer.

John continues: “Our presence at Busworld is the result of incredible effort from the entire team at Mellor. We did some serious ‘crystal ball gazing’ backed by customer and engineering research into future bus needs. This work has been extended to look at the European bus market under the same lens; we want to better understand and work out the synergies and opportunities in these markets.”

Changes in the passenger transport market have been driven by a reduction in passenger numbers. This is in conjunction with the emergence of App based demand responsive services and the pressure to do better environmentally, which has created a space for the introduction of smaller electric and Euro 6 bus products.

John said: "Mellor has developed products that fall into that space while offering the customers a best in class journey experience.

"Leading the charge for us is the Orion E, which is the first vehicle of its type and a real breakthrough product. It was initially launched to the UK market in April this year and is now being introduced to European customers at Busworld this week. We quickly identified that a small electric bus would fill a gap in the market and set out to develop this and bring it to the market.

"We looked at many potential component suppliers for the motor and power electronics for the Orion E. By using European based manufacturers, the technology and manufacturing processes were both advanced and stable. Indeed, components selected by Mellor engineers are in use by many high volume electric car manufacturers.

"The current concern over particulate and NOx pollution in city centres is driving an adoption of electric vehicles across the UK and Europe. We believe the Orion E will find a ready market with operators and authorities particularly in historic cities, most of which already have a green agenda. The size of the Orion E certainly works where road space is at a premium."

Following the decision to expand the company's activities into Europe, Mellor has appointed three European distributors over the last few months to work with them on their plans. These include Swedish based BK Invest, which will be covering Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Denmark), E-Vade of Germany, which also covers Austria, and most recently, E-Bus of the Netherlands which will be looking after Mellor's interests in the Benelux countries.

John added: "We're excited to be working with our new European distributor partners and are looking forward to having them with us on the stand at Busworld, as well as meeting existing and new international customers."

Alongside the Orion E, Mellor also took the step of developing the Strata range with the low floor model already making a significant impact on the UK market. Showcasing the left hand drive version at Busworld, Mellor is confident the Strata will be equally well received in Europe.

John acknowledges that the business targeted the Sprinter based vehicle at a growing stage carriage market for smaller buses. Mercedes-Benz has had oversight of Strata's engineering resulting in their approval for a three-year warranty for all Mercedes components.

Currently the only low floor Sprinter products available in the UK utilise the Sprinter van body to create a passenger saloon with 2+1 seating and a single wheelchair space. Mellor has

instead engineered an entirely new vehicle body, ensuring it can provide a more traditional bus style 2+2 seating and a much more extensive low floor section which has resulted in accommodation for two wheelchairs.

Strata is built to European Whole Vehicle Type Approval standard and has undergone rigorous accelerated durability testing at Millbrook in the UK, which simulated eight years of use in a stage carriage environment.

John said: "When engineering the Strata, we sought a solution to the limits of van based conversions using the Sprinter's robust and durable drivetrain, and avoided creating a carbon copy of existing low floor van derived Sprinter small buses.

"This vehicle has been designed to fit into a fleet with a wide range of bus types and sizes and to offer a cost effective and fuel efficient solution for bus and coach operators servicing both urban and rural markets.

"Reaching Busworld with our exciting new vehicle range and European distributors in place is testament to the hard work put in by my team and an important stage in our journey. We look forward to the next chapter as we aim to become Europe's leading specialist small bus manufacturer."

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Caption for photograph: John Randerson, managing director of Mellor.

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