

Nearly £2 million to be given to tech start-ups to power up the transport revolution

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Entrepreneurs and innovators pioneering new ways of creating a better transport system will see their ideas brought to life from idea through to inception with thanks to government funding, Transport Minister Trudy Harrison has announced.

Up to 53 projects will be awarded a share of £1.95 million in Department for Transport funding. Past winners include a purifying system to lower virus transmission on trains, a portable charger for use at remote locations and a battery cooling system.

In the 2020 round of funding, the University of Surrey constructed a device that could make it safer for people to travel. The device could be installed on trains and buses to purify the air and lower the transmission of certain viruses including COVID-19.

The device works by sucking air through the equivalent of a cold flame. Ionising plasma then attacks any virus particles that may be in the air and breaks them apart, rendering them harmless.

Similarly, Greenway Innovations developed a system that attracts and grabs virus droplets that are produced when you cough. This system could be installed on trains to purify the air and lower the transmission of viruses.

Transport Minister Trudy Harrison said: “Backing innovation is a priority for us and I’m delighted to be supporting Britain’s budding entrepreneurs, as they help us to ensure people can travel at ease and to solve the complex task of decarbonising our transport system.

“This is vital as we look ahead to a greener and safer transport future that will create jobs right across the UK.”

The faster a battery is charged, the hotter it can get, which is why QDot has created a battery cooling system, thanks to funding received in the last round of the competition. The design includes a built-in cooling tab that allows heat to be conducted away rapidly, allowing drivers to charge their vehicles quickly by preventing battery packs from getting too hot.

Meanwhile, thanks to government funding, a portable charging solution that can allow drivers to charge at remote sites, including festivals and tourist attractions, is being developed by Pragmatex. The device can also be used to ‘concentrate’ mains supply where there is little excess power available – charging the battery slowly from constrained supply and then rapidly transferring this stored energy to a vehicle when/where it can charge rapidly.

Now in its 11th round of funding, the Transport Research and Innovation Grant (TRIG) brings together talented start-ups – mainly SMEs and universities – and policymakers at the earliest stages of innovation.

By issuing targeted investments of up to £30,000 for each project, the fund aims to help budding start-ups and academics propel their ideas to market quicker.

CEO of Connected Places Catapult, Nicola Yates OBE, said: “The UK’s innovation ecosystem has a strong track record in developing solutions to complex problems.

“The TRIG 2021 call is focused on finding the next wave of state-of-the-art transport solutions, enabling the sector to achieve net zero and become more resilient to disruption.

“I very much look forward to seeing the proposed innovations and working with the successful teams to support their journey to market.”

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