

Britishvolt and sportscar maker Lotus collaborate to develop tailor-made battery cells

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Source: Getty Images/triloks

UK-based electric vehicle (EV) battery startup Britishvolt has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the sports car manufacturer Lotus to focus on the codevelopment of an innovative new battery cell package to power the next generation of electric sports cars from Lotus, the company announced on 28 January 2022.

The two companies plan to collaborate on integrating cell formats and chemistry that provide enhanced energy density and power capability, fast charging and other specifications, it said. The jointly developed battery package will be featured in a new sports car, utilizing the advanced electric propulsion technologies developed by Lotus, it said, adding that the development work on the project will benefit from the close proximity of Lotus and Britishvolt's research and development (R&D) centers of excellence in the West Midlands, which is also referred as the UK's "golden triangle" of battery development.

For Lotus, the new collaboration with Britishvolt is a significant development in its ongoing transformation from a UK-based sports car company to a global and all-electric performance car business and brand. The MoU with Britishvolt comes after Lotus' decision to invest GBP100 million (USD134.28 million) in its UK-based facilities, which includes its manufacturing center at Hethel, from which it plans to produce the Evija pure electric hypercar and the Emira sports car.

Commenting on the MoU with Lotus, Oliver Jones, chief commercial officer at Britishvolt, said, "This MoU demonstrates that the legacy one-size-fits-all cell strategy is no longer valid in the rapidly developing electric mobility market. It also reinforces Britishvolt's differentiation strategy of close customer intimacy and partnering to fully optimize battery solutions and enable the differentiation so important to these iconic brands and products. As in Formula 1, this high-performance research and development will ultimately cascade down to influence the electro chemistries of more affordable batteries and EVs."

Adding to that, Matt Windle, Lotus Cars managing director, said, "Lotus is delighted to be collaborating with Britishvolt to develop new battery cell technology to showcase the thrilling performance that a Lotus EV sports car can deliver. These are the first exciting steps on the journey towards an all-new electric sports car from Lotus. Last year we committed Lotus to a pure electric future, and in the first month of this year we announce another significant step on that journey. In the coming months we will be unveiling the Type 132, an all-new and all-electric Lotus SUV and we've confirmed three more EVs are on the way."

Significance: According to Advanced Propulsion Centre (APC) research, UK will need over 90GWh per annum of batteries for cars and light commercials alone by 2030, which will represent over 11% of the total demand across Europe. Britishvolt recently announced that it has secured a total funding of GBP1.7 billion (USD2.3 billion) through the APC-managed Automotive Transformation Fund (ATF), which has enabled a long-term partnership with Trixtax and UK-based investment company abrdn to deliver the private funding. The funding received by the battery startup is also backed by the UK government grant of GBP100 million (USD136 million).

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