

RDM Group sets the pace with Land Rover on Electric Defender Research Vehicle

A Coventry-based automotive specialist was in the spotlight at the Geneva Motor Show recently, after helping Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) develop and build seven Electric Defender research vehicles.

RDM Group worked with CAD engineers from the thriving car manufacturer to transform initial concept designs into an all-terrain vehicle that produces zero emissions.

This included providing mechanical installation solutions, main battery installation development and data logging technology so vehicle information can be accessed remotely via GSM.

“We have a long-standing relationship with Jaguar Land Rover and were approached by the project leader to see if we would be interested in converting the vehicles,” explained Les Brighouse, Principal Design Engineer at RDM.

“It was a concept that really excited us and suited our automotive expertise, with a lot of emphasis on technical content and being able to meet stringent delivery deadlines.”

He went on to add: “The regular diesel engine has been substituted for a 70kw electric motor capable of 243lb-ft of torque – this is powered by a 300-volt lithium-ion battery.

“Other solutions we’ve provided include modifications to the vehicle wiring harness, installation design of diesel fired heater systems, new instrument pack dedicated to new electrical displays and a specific watchdog safety control ECU.”

The Land Rover Electric Defender is unique in that it retains the original proven 4x4 drivetrain, allowing it to wade through 80cm of water and pull a 12 tonne road train up a 13% incline from a standing start.

Regenerative braking recharges the battery on down hill off road sections so the vehicle is capable of running up to 8 hours off road on a single charge.

Interest from the global motoring media at Geneva was huge, with one of the demonstration vehicles actually moved on to Jaguar Land Rover’s main exhibition stand.

The seven Land Rover Electric Defenders will now go into real life trials across some of the world’s roughest terrains.

David Keene, Chairman at RDM Group, concluded: “Being involved in such a high profile project is great for our business and builds on our considerable

experience in EV and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. It's also an important step forward in our long-term vision to offer a dedicated low volume vehicle converter/build facility for car makers.”

RDM Group was initially founded to provide engineering services to the automotive sector and this part of the business continues to bring in 80% of its total turnover.

Today, the company currently supplies a number of tier 1s and OEMs with wiring harnesses/looms, electronic ECUs, PCBs, plastic mouldings, trim and metal assemblies and part logistics management services.

It currently employs 38 people at its Bilton Industrial Estate facility and is looking to target £6m of annual sales this year.

For further information, please contact David Keene on 024 7663 5818 or visit www.rdmgroup.co.uk