Honda Civic 2.0 i-MMD ADVANCE – Road Test

Published: December 22, 2025
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Online version: https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/honda-civic-2-0-i-mmd-advance-road-test/



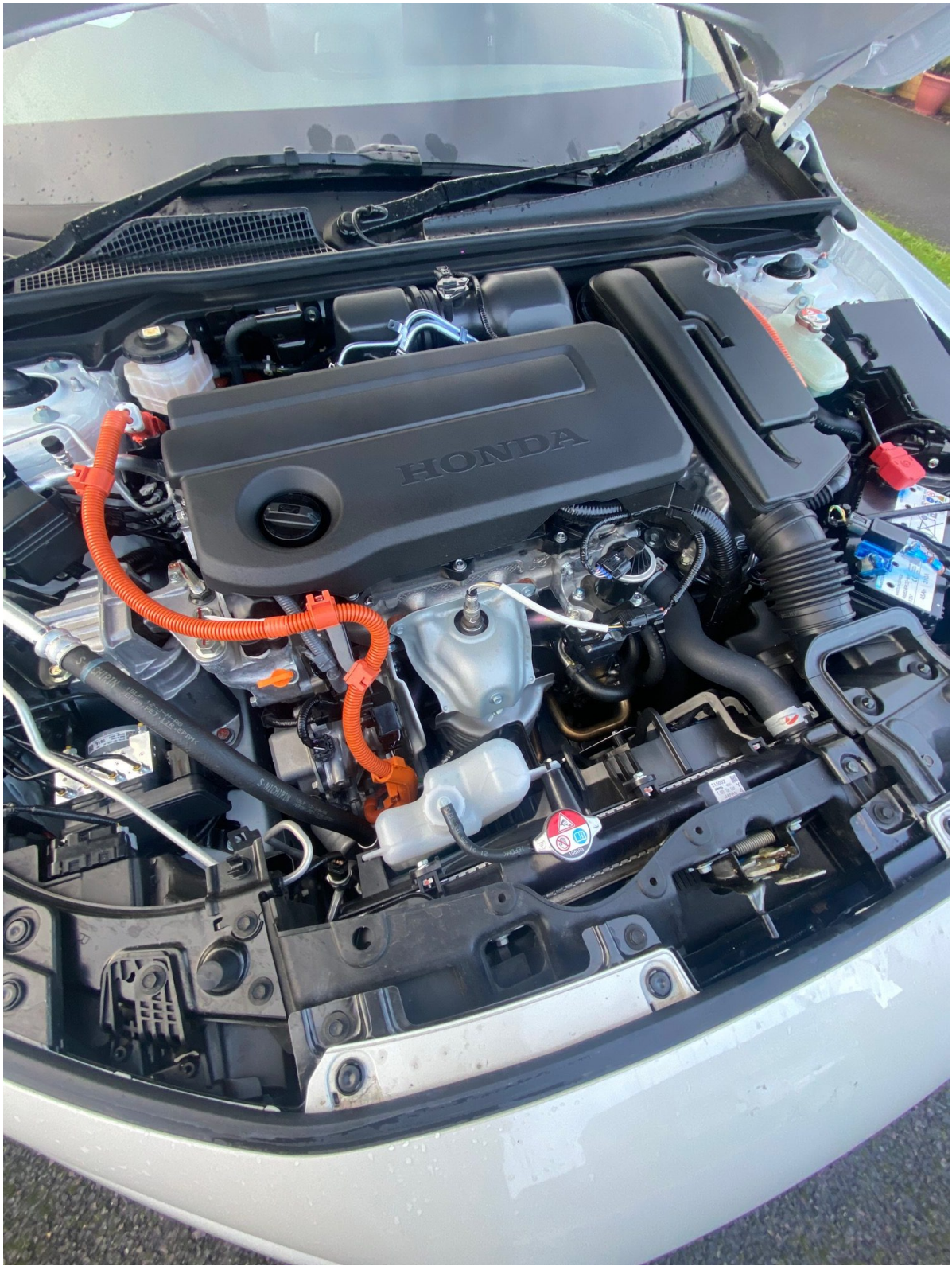
Honda Civic 2.0 i-MMD ADVANCE – Road Test

Honda’s 25 years experience of building hybrid cars shows up exceptionally well in the latest Civic Advance, writes Robin Roberts (and WheelsWithinWales).

The current Honda Civic range comprises Elegance, Sport and Advance models, with respective prices from £33,795, £35,495 and £38,695.

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There is a common 4 cyl 2.0 litre petrol and full-hybrid front wheel drive powertrain with continuously variable transmission for all trim levels and it means the Civic e:HEV can run on electric power alone for over 30 miles if a driver decides to.


HONDA

The intelligent electronics will not let the traction battery and twin motors run out of power and introduces the petrol engine to top up a charge generated by regenerative braking, so you never plug into a mains charger.

Inside it has a familiar digital display for the driver which changes with modes yet is always crisp and clear, with a multi-function adjustable steering wheel, a nine-inch Honda Connect touchscreen integrating to your mobile phone settings and a straightforward dual zone climate control system for warm feet and cool heads. It had Bose speakers for excellent reproduction.

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Drivers are well looked after with a suite of active and passive safety features grouped under the Honda Sensing system with intelligent cruise control, lane assist, cross-traffic and blind spots alerts.

On the central tunnel are the drive and mode buttons as well as parking brake controls including the automatic setting.

A driver can choose to have balanced power with efficiency in the Normal mode, boosted performance in Sport, greater efficiency in Econ or tailored power and responses through the Individual mode. The changes are instant and noticeable.

The secondary buttons on the wheel-spokes were on the small side for those with big fingers and the touchscreen is not the biggest to use but it operated quickly and its various displays were clear.

You could quickly set and maintain any chosen temperature with a good output and directional control, aided by four powered windows and a good sized electric sunroof.

Oddments room was reasonable but not exceptional throughout the cabin and the boot was easy to load and extend, and would take a few cases.

For the driver and passengers it was effortless to get into or out of with good-sized doors, and seat adjustment was very good for the driver but not so useful for the front seat passenger. Those behind might find legroom tight for taller persons.

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We found the seats a bit thin although well shaped and the suspension really came into its own to absorb the bumps we could hear the springs coping with. Body roll was modest and the roadholding inspired confidence.

The Civic Advance was agile and responsive to changes of direction, throttle and brakes and never put off line by mid-corner potholes or bumps.

Visibility was generally good, helped by sensors all round and a camera alerting the driver to the car’s proximity to hazards, so long as they were not mired in road dirt.

It has some of the brightest and fastest responding intelligent headlights on any car and produced a long, wide beam that instantly dipped when it detected oncoming traffic.

Generally, noises were modest but the suspension liked to let you know how hard it was working and showed up how well it coped, and the engine, although very smooth when accelerating, also increased its fussy tone with road speed. Wind and other mechanical sounds were muted.

Although the interior was predominantly black apart from some brightwork highlights and colour accents, it looked more upmarket than the price might lead you to think.

VERDICT

The Honda Civic can trace is origin over eleven generations to 1972. Its popularity has kept it as a backbone of the brand and today it still stands out as one of the best full hybrid petrol cars on sale, even lined up against more recent rivals which somehow lack the fun factor which comes with the Civic.

For: Powertrain smoothness and economy, comfortable ride, excellent steering and brakes, well equipped, agile and responsive.

Against: Some road and engine noises, limited rear legroom and thin seats.



FAST FACTS

Model: Honda Civic 2.0 Advance


HONDA

Price: £39,395

Mechanical: 184 PS 4 cyl 2.0 petrol-hybrid, cvt

Max Speed: 112 mph

0 – 62 mph: 7.8 secs

Combined MPG: 51

Insurance Group: 28

C02 emissions: 114 g/km

Bik rating: Band G, £440FY, £195SR

Warranty: 5 years/ 90,000 miles

Size: L 4.56 m (14.96 ft), W 2.09 m (6.86 ft), H 1.41 m (4.63 ft)

Bootspace: 404 to 1,187 litres (14.27 to 41.92 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,503 kg (3,314 lb)

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