Honda e city car – Road Test

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The Honda e Advanced all-electric City Car…

…Plugged in and driven by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Honda is currently taking a different lane down the electric highway opening for us in Britain and Europe and selling the Honda e city car.

While most car makers want to get us into their small to medium sized hatchbacks and crossover models, Honda e is unashamedly a model intended for commuters and staged longer journeys. It’s essentially a city car with style and sophistication.



With a maximum 125 miles between recharges it’s not going to be suitable for regular long runs but the fact it takes only 30 mins to charge to 80% on a 50 kW point means it can cover ground in a more relaxed manner.



In July 2021 we had a first drive in the Honda e Advance and were generally impressed by its abilities but it was 12 months later that we had the opportunity to give it a longer appraisal and it didn't disappoint.

There is the £34,420 standard model or the £36,920 Advanced which we tested with a performance boost, front de-icer, parking assistance, multi-view and reversing cameras with blind spot detection and cross traffic monitor, heated steering wheel together with audio upgrade and optional 17-inch alloy wheels.

It's a conventional five-door model with four seats and a reasonable boot but its outstanding point in practical terms is a compact London-cab style turning circle of approximately 8.6 m (just over 28 feet) which makes it extremely maneuverable and emphasises its urban suitability.

The tweaked 113 kW motor is near silent in operation and provided rapid pick-up from rest or in traffic and overtaking.

Honda has designed the e with normal or sport modes to meet differing needs of a driver but it also uses the motor's natural recuperation and braking to select a single-pedal driving style for efficient power use and reduced driving stress.

So, ease off and without using the footbrake the Honda e will rapidly reduce speed to an eventual stop if necessary but you have the footbrake for preference or emergencies and the car's combined systems really bring about dramatic retardation, backed up with a conventional small parking brake which automatically releases when you move off.

With a 50:50 weight distribution and very low centre of gravity the Honda e handles really well, reminding me of go-kart agility but with supreme comfort.



Acceleration is very strong, very progressive and utterly silent from the motor with no gearchanges to worry about.

The sharpness of the steering allows it to slip into the tightest parking space and the Advanced specification includes automatic-parking assistance. You get good feedback through the wheel on open roads and its handling is a delight.

There are no door mirrors but cameras on the front doors relay what is in view to screens just inside the A-pillars. It took a bit of getting use to but the display was very clear and widespread.

Secondary controls are a technical treat for the driver with really sophisticated infotainment and driver assistance systems at fingertips, the latest compatible wifi and connectivity and

probably the biggest display screen, actually incorporating two small screens, you'll see in a car at this price. The 'wallpaper' background has a choice of four themes but you can add your own as well and this really caught the eye of our passengers, who could also select what they wished to see in front.




Bluetooth Audio
General Settings
Honda App Center
FM
Wi-Fi Hotspot
HDMI
All Apps
9:53
87.9
TA TP
Range
67 miles
Search Station
Personal Assistant
Navigation
EV Menu
Phone
Smartphone Connection
TA
All Apps
Safety Config
ON/OFF
A/C
AUTO



Stalks operated the usual wipers and lights, and they worked well, with paddles either side to increase or decrease the car's retardation and rockers on the spokes worked the speed control and entertainment functions.

You get A/C in the Advanced version and that coped well on some very hot days in the cabin with its big window area and partial glass sunroof which had a sliding blind to help but the system did visibly and quickly reduce the battery capacity and range.

Oddments provision is very good for a small family car and there are plenty of places to drop bottles of water, sweets, tissues, keys and phones and no less than four USB points.

Access was excellent with wide opening doors and a high-lifting fifth door accessing the low floor to the boot containing the dual charging cables for domestic or rapid chargers.

Once inside the front seats had reasonable but not generous adjustment room while those behind would find legroom a bit tight if above average height. Headroom was good.





The front seats were nicely shaped and supporting while the rear bench-type was much flatter but had the benefit of flat-folding to extend the loadbed.



Noise levels are low in the Honda e and the absence of a conventional engine and gearbox throws into relief the other major sources, continuous but variable road rumbles and suspension bump-thump with a trace of wind wuffle.

Reaction to the Honda e has been good and encourages them with their next generation of models, including a more conventional MPV and a two-seater sportster.



VERDICT

The Honda e is an eye-catching model which not only makes a statement about the company's future but also the driver and it would be a great advertising medium for city businesses to consider.

For: Very responsive with pleasant steering and small turning circle, sophisticated powertrain, comfortable, easy to drive and bursting with technology for driver and passengers, beneficial for taxes, unique looks.

Against: Comparatively short driving range, intended as city car with performance to match, some road noise and strictly a four-seater.

FAST FACTS

Honda e Advanced



Price: £37,520, inc premium paint

Mechanical: 154 ps/113 kw single speed motor with 35.5 kWh battery, automatic transmission, rear wheel drive

Max Speed: 90 mph

0 – 62mph: 8.3sec

Combined range: 125 miles

Insurance Group: 29

C02 emissions: Zero g/km

Tax costs: BiK rating 2%, VED First Year £Zero, Standard rate £Zero

Warranty: 3 years/ 60,000 miles & battery 8 years/ 100,000 miles

Size: L 3.90 m (12.80 ft), W 1.75 m (5.74 ft), H 1.52 m (4.99 ft)

Bootspace: 171 to 861 litres (6.04 to 30.41 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 1,555 kg (3,428 lb)