

Dyson driving towards all-terrain electric car

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British industrial design engineer and founder of the Dyson company, James Dyson, posing with some of his products last year

James Dyson, famed for his vacuum cleaners, hinted Thursday that his electric car would be more energy efficient than rivals—and with "very large wheels" for city and rough-terrain driving.

Releasing brief details of patents filed 18 months ago ahead of the car's expected launch in 2021, Dyson said in a memo shared with media: "the patents show a car with very large wheels, giving a low rolling resistance and high ground clearance.

"This makes a [vehicle](#) suited to city life and rough terrain but could also contribute to increased range and efficiency," he said, cautioning however that current designs were far from set in stone.

The British engineering entrepreneur acknowledged the patents were deliberately light on specifics but said "they do reveal some of the ways we might improve Battery Electric Vehicles".

He also indicated that Dyson would move away from the status quo whereby electric car manufacturers base designs on existing formats that are adapted for electric propulsion systems.

"Such an approach is cost effective, however it tends to miss opportunities for mass-reduction and aerodynamic improvements which would improve the energy efficiency of the vehicle," he said.

Dyson also noted the drawback of focusing on smaller vehicles to reduce mass and extend driving range.

"However, the size and ride comfort of such vehicles tends to limit their attractiveness and utility," the billionaire inventor added.

The company last year announced Singapore as the site for its first electric car plant, sparking criticism of its Brexit-backing founder for not investing more in British manufacturing.

However it has set up an electric-car research hub in the UK.

Electric vehicles are increasing in popularity as governments worldwide drive forward plans to gradually phase out polluting petrol and diesel cars.

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