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Go North East celebrates Clean Air Day with announcement of £12m investment in environmentally friendly buses to make buses even better and help tackle rising congestion

Go North East, the region's largest bus company, is celebrating Clean Air Day with the announcement of a £12 million investment in 54 high-specification environmentally friendly buses to help revolutionise bus travel across the region.

The order from Go North East includes the region's first latest generation zero-emissions full electric single-deck buses, with 9 now confirmed from the world's largest electric bus manufacturer, Yutong, as well as 34 of the latest low-emission Euro 6 engined double-deck buses and 11 single-deck buses from UK based manufacturers Wrightbus and Alexander Dennis Limited.

The buses will start to enter service from September, with the electric buses arriving in July next year. The double-deckers will be part of the bus operator's recently announced 'X-lines' concept for its fastest and most direct commuter and express traveller services into the North East's cities including Newcastle, Durham and Sunderland.

Customers on the current Red Kite 45, 46 and 47 and Toon Link X30, X31, X70 and X71 services can look forward to the new 'gold standard' of express bus travel, with more seats and onboard facilities as these become the next part of the company's X-lines network.

Local passengers on Gateshead and Newcastle Green Arrow route 97 will also benefit from brand new upgraded single-deck buses, whilst the first electric buses will be used on the Saltwell Park to Gateshead and Newcastle routes 53 and 54.

The buses will feature comfortable high-backed seating, modern coffee shop style interiors with tables, at-seat USB charging points, free Wi-Fi and next stop audio and visual passenger information systems.

They will also meet the stringent emission standards of the promised Clean Air or Low Emission Zone concepts recently consulted on.

The buses will build on the operator's existing investment, which has already seen 170 low-emission buses join the fleet in recent years, all further improving the carbon footprint of the 62 million journeys made by Go North East customers every year.

Go North East is keen to make it clear that buses are part of the solution, not the problem, when it comes to improving air quality, with continued investment in environmentally friendly buses that also provide a viable alternative to many car journeys and can help ease congestion.

Commenting on the investment, Martijn Gilbert, Go North East's Managing Director, said: "We're delighted to be bringing these buses into the Go North East fleet and further improving services for our customers.

"We have worked with the manufacturers to develop a class leading specification that will help revolutionise local bus travel on our services, helping to make them an even more viable alternative to many car journeys.

"If we are serious about improving air quality then we have to properly embrace public transport and tackle rising congestion. These buses represent a major investment from us as we continue to play our part in supporting the mass mobility and connectivity of the communities we serve by providing high quality, dependable and green public transport services.

"Congestion only worsens air quality and it has a far wider health and economic impact on local communities too. More needs to be done to address its causes and local buses have an important role to play in that, working in partnership with local authorities to ensure that the largest and most efficient carriers of passenger journeys receive the right priority and dependability from the road network that they control.

"The biggest change in recent times has got to be the climate crisis that we are now increasingly facing. Easing congestion through further optimisation of the highway network and developing more bus priority along the busiest corridors is essential in enabling bus companies to deliver even better services, matching their investment in vehicles and the hard work of their employees. This will help improve air quality by reducing high polluting idling traffic of all types and make bus journeys more reliable, cost effective and attractive, thus switching journeys from less polluting modes and further improving air quality."

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