



Go North East celebrates 29 new buses electrifying the North East

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Go North East puts clean travel centre stage with electric bus launch

On Wednesday, Go North East transformed the Utilita Arena Newcastle into a concert venue with a difference, launching 29 brand-new electric buses in an event unlike anything the region has seen before as part of North East Mayor Kim McGuinness' drive to create a world class public transport system.

Backed by a £17 million joint investment from Go North East, the North East Combined Authority and the Department for Transport, three of the North

East's busiest bus routes are going electric – the Angel 21, X66 and service 58 – together carrying more than five million passengers every year.

Guests were welcomed with lanyards and limited-edition concert-style T-shirts, before the arena erupted into a wristband light show inspired by the likes of Taylor Swift and Coldplay. As the finale hit, the lights lifted to reveal the new fleet of electric double-deckers centre-stage – the first time buses have ever taken the spotlight at the venue.

Among the VIPs were pupils from Gibside School and Kells Lane Primary School, whose communities will be among the first to be served by the new fleet. They arrived and departed on the electric buses themselves, becoming the first passengers in the North East to experience the quieter, cleaner journeys. All 29 vehicles have been built in the UK by Wrightbus and will be powered up by charging points at the operator's Riverside depot, thanks to Northern Powergrid.

The audience also included councillors, MPs, accessibility groups and Go North East colleagues, with keynote speeches from Kim McGuinness, North East Mayor, and Simon Lightwood, Roads and Buses Minister

North East Mayor, Kim McGuinness, said: “I travelled to today’s launch on one of the new electric buses with local schoolchildren, and it was the perfect way to see first-hand the difference they will make. What better way to experience the future of bus travel in the North East than on the very first journey, alongside the next generation who will benefit most from cleaner air and quieter streets.

“This launch is celebrating real change. These 29 new electric buses will nearly double the number already on our roads, and they’re part of a much bigger rollout that will see more electric buses introduced on more routes across the North East. I’ve been clear that it’s my ambition to see diesel buses phased out within a decade, and today we’ve made a big step towards that.”

Nigel Featham, Managing Director of Go North East, said: “If you’re going to change the face of public transport in the North East, you should do it properly. These buses will make a real difference to people’s everyday lives, so a show-stopping launch felt exactly right.

“We’re proud to be bringing quieter, zero-emission journeys to some of our busiest routes, improving air quality and giving passengers a more modern, comfortable experience. It was especially important to us that local schoolchildren were part of today – they’re the generation who’ll benefit most from cleaner transport.”

Roads and Buses Minister, Simon Lightwood, said: “Today was an incredibly exciting moment for the North East. To see these brand-new electric buses in the middle of the iconic Utilita Arena shows just how important buses are to local communities.

“Backed by over £7 million in funding from the Government, these buses mean smoother, greener journeys for thousands of passengers across the North East.

“With our landmark Bus Services Act now law and £3 billion put aside for bus services over the next three years, this is another step towards our bus revolution.”

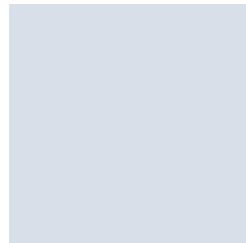
The new electric fleet includes a range of accessibility upgrades, such as audio-visual next-stop announcements, hearing loops and external sounders to alert pedestrians, helping to make bus travel more inclusive for everyone.

The buses will enter service over the coming weeks on the Angel 21 between Newcastle and Durham, the X66 linking Gateshead and the Metrocentre, and service 58 connecting Newcastle, Heworth and the Amazon site at Follingsby.

For the North East, it's more than a launch – it's a statement. Cleaner air, quieter streets and a step change in the quality of everyday bus travel, delivered with a little bit of rock-and-roll.

[Go North East website](#)

Contacts



Katie Tiffin
Marketing Coordinator
Marketing
katie.tiffin@gonortheast.co.uk
07779 385244