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Flagship Sunderland city bus link gets a makeover

A flagship Sunderland bus route that links the city's main visitor attractions is to get new buses and a new colour scheme that celebrates the city's heritage.

The Sunderland Connect service, 700, has three new low emission buses - with the iconic Wearmouth Bridge on the side as part of a new look for the popular city centre service.

Go North East, the bus company which operates Sunderland Connect, has invested in new Optare Solo buses which are fitted with the very latest low emission engines.

Each bus is equipped with audio and visual announcements and is liveried to reflect the strong connection between the service and Sunderland's heritage.

The Sunderland Connect service 700 is paid for and operated through a partnership between Sunderland City Council, Nexus and the University of Sunderland.

Head of Bus Services at Nexus, Mike Scott, said: "Sunderland Connect provides a vital link across to all of the visitor destinations and attractions that the city has to offer, and passengers can now look forward to three brand new buses on the route.

"This investment will help us to build on the success of Sunderland Connect, which is an affordable and convenient bus service that is popular with shoppers, visitors and students."

Sunderland City Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Amy Wilson said: "This latest investment in the Sunderland Connect Service will help improve the service still further, and hopefully attract even more regular passengers in the future.

"The 700 provides people with an accessible, affordable and convenient way of travelling to and through the city centre, to some very popular destinations.

"The joint funding of the 700 with our partners at Nexus and the University of Sunderland is also another demonstration of this city's commitment to promoting public transport, and working together to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions."

Mike Foster, Estates Project Manager at the University of Sunderland, said: "The Sunderland Connect 700 service provides a vital link for many of our students between The Sir Tom Cowie Campus at St Peter's and the City Centre Campus. As a University we are committed to minimising our environmental impact, by adopting sustainable practices throughout our business. We are delighted that the low emission engines fitted in the new Optare Solo buses will help us achieve the objectives set out in our Environmental Strategy."

Allan Kennedy, Sales Director of UK bus manufacturer Optare said: “We are delighted that Go North East have chosen to add more low carbon Euro 6 Optare buses to their fleet as part of their commitment to improve air quality across the North East.”

Sunderland Connect, which was launched in 2011, is the main route that links the attractions in Sunderland, including the Empire Theatre, the Stadium of Light, the Aquatic Centre, the National Glass Centre and the Museum and Winter Gardens.

As well as visiting the main University campuses the service visits several points of interest and utility on its journey around the City, including Sunderland Hospital, Park lane Interchange, the renowned Wearmouth twin bridges, the Stadium of Light,

Sunderland Aquatic Centre, the National Glass Centre, West Sunnyside and the Winter gardens.

The 700 operates to all these locations every 15 minutes Monday to Saturday daytimes, and during the summer months the service also operates to Roker Beach. Several other destinations including local shops, leisure facilities and hotels are also directly accessible on the 700 bus.

[Go North East website](#)