



Go North East managing director Martijn Gilbert flipping the switch on Voltra alongside driving and engineering colleagues

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Go North East launches game-changing electric buses in Newcastle and Gateshead

Go North East has today launched the region's first fully-electric bus fleet in the North East, which are capable of all-day service with a single overnight charge, supporting the company's commitment to improve air quality.

The switch was flipped on the nine high-tech zero-emission buses this morning, as part of a £3.7million joint-funded project from Go North East and the Government's Ultra-Low Emission Bus Fund, following a bid that was also supported by Nexus and Gateshead Council.

This fund helps support some of the additional costs of electric vehicles over diesel equivalents and the charging infrastructure.

Based at the company's depot in Gateshead, these game-changing buses are powered by zero-emission clean sources such as solar, wind and hydro, and are housed in a new electric bus micro depot capable of accommodating 30 electric buses, paving the way for future investment.

These state-of-the-art, super environmentally friendly buses, branded 'Voltra', will run between Gateshead, Saltwell Park and Newcastle on Go North East services 53 and 54.

They have a striking new futuristic look and boast a whole host of onboard features to deliver a bus of the future experience, including high quality interiors with luxury seating using sustainably produced materials.

Features include free Wi-Fi, wireless and USB charging, seat back phone holders that allow you to comfortably watch videos from your seat, next-stop audio-visual announcements, and 'tap-on tap-off' contactless bankcard ticketing, which is a first for the North East.

All you need to do when travelling on Voltra is simply tap your contactless card as you get on, and as you get off, then the system automatically calculates the fare and caps out at the day or weekly ticket prices if travelling multiple times, making sure you pay the best price – no more than £3 a day or £13 a week.

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: "This is the dawn of a new era for bus travel here in the North East as we launch what we believe are the very best local buses in the UK, and probably beyond, with a game-changing bus of the future experience for customers, not just with zero-emission buses but a range of pioneering technologies and customer features to revolutionise bus travel.

"This represents a major investment of £2million topped up by the Government's Ultra-Low Emission Bus Fund, to help boost the recovery of our region ready for unlocking and demonstrates our commitment to improving air quality for our communities.

“Sustainability is key and our Voltra buses run on electricity sourced with green credentials, but Voltra is far more than an electric bus fleet as we’ve looked at every detail and maximised the use of technology to provide a new standard in bus travel including customer comfort, information and ticketing.

“We hope that by introducing these fully-electric buses, we can help flip the switch on people’s behaviour too and see more people across our region leave the car behind to help reduce congestion on our roads and improve air quality for us all. Clean, affordable and sustainable next generation travel has arrived.”

Councillor Martin Gannon, Leader of Gateshead Council and Chair of the North East Joint Transport Committee, added: “The launch of Go North East’s fully-electric bus fleet shows that once again the North East is leading the way in providing innovative sustainable transport options for the public. I am particularly pleased that the region’s first electric buses will be launched in my hometown of Gateshead.

“The introduction of Voltra services will help to improve air quality in the region and supports our commitment to carbon reduction across the board. As outlined in the draft North East Transport Plan, we’re keen to lead the green transport revolution and we’d encourage people to make use of these wonderful new services in the future.”

To find out more about Go North East, visit www.gonortheast.co.uk.

[Go North East website](http://www.gonortheast.co.uk)