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Groundbreaking solar-powered digital bus information arrives in Newcastle

Go North East, the region's largest bus operator, working in partnership with Newcastle City Council and UK supplier McKenna Brothers, has installed the first of three state of the art 'e-ink' and live talking bus stop information displays in the City.

Funded by Go North East as part of its game changing Voltra electric bus service that has set out to deliver a bus of the future experience on routes 53 and 54 between Newcastle, Gateshead and Saltwell Park, the solar-powered screens provide both full timetable and live times information on a giant Kindle type screen that is solar powered and GPS linked to the operator's

central computer system.

The innovative new system avoids the needs for paper displays at bus stops and takes a real time feed from the buses to provide waiting passengers with highly accurate live times of bus arrivals and departures. The system can also display information on other nearby bus services through the new nationwide Bus Open Data (BODS) database.

The system additionally provides a 'text to speech' audible facility, helping further improve the accessibility of bus services.

The first system is installed on a bus shelter outside Newcastle Central Station for Saltwell Park bound passengers, with a second to follow on Westgate Road for Quayside and Gateshead bound passengers, whilst a third system outside the Quayside's Guildhall will provide the next level of technology to Quayside visitors travelling back to the City Centre and Railway Station.

The bus stop systems are part of a wider customer information revolution linked to the new Voltra electric buses which include on-board audio and visual next stop customer information and display live onward bus connections and Metro and National Rail times and Platform information upon approach to key interchanges and transport hubs. Go North East's Voltra buses also have the regions first deployment of London style 'tap on, tap off' contactless bankcard ticketing which automatically caps fares at day and weekly ticket prices.

Commenting on the new system, Martijn Gilbert, managing director of Go North East, said: "We are extremely proud to be deploying this new system here in Newcastle which harnesses the very latest technology for bus users.

"This is one of just a handful of such installations across the UK and we hope that, working with Local Authority stakeholders, more can be installed in the future. Our work with McKenna Brothers on these installations builds on our investment in a new smartphone app with Uber style live buses on a moving map, live bus times and mobile tickets.

"Using the latest digital tools helps us improve the experience for our users and, we hope, give more people the confidence to get onboard our clean, safe

and affordable buses to help play their part in reducing congestion and improving air quality."

[Go North East website](#)