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Region's largest bus operator welcomes new bus strategy and stands ready to deliver in partnership with councils

Today (15 March) the Government has published [Bus Back Better](#), the long-term [National Bus Strategy](#) for England outside London.

The strategy outlines ambitious reform of how bus services are planned and delivered.

- [Read about the National Bus Strategy](#)

Martijn Gilbert, managing director at Go North East, said: “We welcome the Government’s new bus strategy and investment commitment that will align councils’ and highway matters with buses for the benefit of passengers, our towns and communities and air quality.

“Over recent years we have been busy making the region’s buses better, leading to the first growth in North East bus use in a decade prior to the pandemic, with local bus use fourth highest in the country, outside London.

“We are already ahead of the curve in many of the areas outlined in the strategy. The region’s commercial bus networks already accept contactless bankcards, a number of vehicles are fitted with next stop customer information systems and at Go North East we recently launched the region’s first electric buses, Voltra.

“We look forward to the concept of a statutory ‘Enhanced Partnership’ to unlock support to help deliver the further improvement set out in the strategy and have already been working with local transport authorities on a partnership.

“Indeed last week NEbus, our local bus operators’ association, wrote a joint letter to the Government with the North East Joint Transport Committee to confirm our commitment to working together, a first step towards the sort of formal Enhanced Partnership mentioned in this new strategy.

“We stand ready to deliver, matching the commitments of councils, to not just level up the North East in its recovery in a post pandemic world, but also the current inequality of buses in comparison to car use in terms of cost and convenience, especially in respect of road space allocation, prioritisation and car parking provision.

“We believe that buses need to be strongly aligned with other ways of travelling such as walking, cycling, rail and metro systems to improve integrated transport.

“The region’s commercial bus network has a fully smartcard enabled system that accepts contactless bank cards, and is ready to work with local metro and rail systems.

“We support the call for funding to upgrade those systems in the recently published North East Transport Plan to help take tickets like the existing Network One Tyne and Wear integrated bus, metro and rail product to the next level of modernisation and ease of use for more and more passengers.”

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

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