

Transport Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Panel

DATE	03/03/2026
REPORT OF	Carolina Borgstrom, Director for Economy, Environment and Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Electrification of Buses
STATUS	Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

Electric buses would contribute to the Council's 'Stronger Communities' objective by enhancing access to health, community, shopping and other services for those passengers travelling by public transport. Electric buses would make a significant contribution to the Council's aims by helping to deliver a greener, cleaner borough through reductions in traffic-related air pollution. If the local bus network was replaced with electric buses, it is anticipated the Council and local bus operators would contribute towards improved public health and enhance local bus travel. Electric buses would also support North East Lincolnshire as the borough of 'Renewable Energy'.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update in relation to electric buses in North East Lincolnshire (NEL).

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

The panel is asked to note the update provided within this report and comment on the approach taken.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Government has previously encouraged every Local Transport Authority (LTA), and bus operator in England to be in a statutory Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership using existing powers in the Bus Services Act 2017. The Council is currently the Local Transport Authority for North East Lincolnshire (until 1 April 2026) and works in partnership with local bus operators to deliver local bus services. Essentially this means the local bus operators provide and deliver local bus services and the Council provides infrastructure including bus stops, bus shelters, the highway etc.
- 1.2 Electric buses provide bus passengers with a number of benefits (in addition to the green credentials) including a smooth, quieter ride along with all the latest technology for customer comfort and accessibility.
- 1.3 Stagecoach East Midlands are the main provider of local bus services in North East Lincolnshire and they are responsible for the provision of the vehicles which are used to deliver local bus services. Currently the fleet strategy

involves cascading vehicles from other areas of the Stagecoach Group with vehicle ages that operate bus services in North East Lincolnshire ranging from 2004 to 2019 (as of 15/01/2026). It is anticipated Stagecoach East Midlands will continue cascading vehicles from other areas of the Stagecoach Group in the medium to long term unless the Council can make it more attractive to invest in newer low emission vehicles, including electric buses. For example, providing a new bus station may encourage investment in electric buses along with bus friendly changes to transport strategy. Investment in infrastructure including bus priority and parking policies (policies that discourage car use) may enable bus operators to build a strong business case for electric vehicle investment. Investment is normally allocated to the strongest routes along with bus routes which benefit from supportive infrastructure measures. If journey times increase due to congestion, then routes may become less commercially viable and in turn this makes the business case for investment more challenging.

- 1.4 Hull is an example where Stagecoach East Midlands can demonstrate continued supportive infrastructure measures, such as bus priority lanes, which in turn has led to strong passenger levels. Stagecoach East Midlands are in the process of delivering electric vehicles in Hull. Once the electric vehicles are in operation in Hull, they have offered to host a visit for Council Members.
- 1.5 Local Transport Authorities have previously been able to submit bids to the Department for Transport (DfT) for funding to deliver electric buses. In 2020/2021, NELC and Stagecoach East Midlands submitted an expression of interest application to the DfT "All Electric Bus Town". The Council's "All Electric Bus Town" bid included the "replacement of the core bus network (around 53 buses) with electric buses (throughout the whole of North East Lincolnshire, including the towns of Grimsby, Cleethorpes and Immingham (only excluding long distance locally registered bus services running cross boundary from Grimsby to Louth (251 service), Lincoln (53 service) and Hull (250 service))" It was previously expected by converting the existing Stagecoach East Midlands (Grimsby Cleethorpes) fleet to zero emission electric buses, would save around 4,000,000 kg per year of CO₂ and around 240,000 trees would have to grow in one year to absorb the current Stagecoach Grimsby Cleethorpes CO₂ emissions. The overall bid was valued at £23,592,896 but the bid was unsuccessful.
- 1.6 Key learning from the Council's "All Electric Bus Town" bid were;
- Early engagement with local bus operators is important,
 - It is important to work with local power providers such as Northern Powergrid to deliver a technical study in order to fully understand the impact of around 50 buses charging at any one time. It is anticipated this would impact on electrical sub stations, the electrical distribution network including electrical connections into bus depots. It is anticipated infrastructure upgrades will be needed to ensure buses can charge as required and the electric bus charging does not impact on other local stakeholders.
 - Local transport authorities are normally required to provide capital match funding towards external funding bids for electric buses.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 As discussed in 1.4, early discussions with power providers such as Northern Powergrid are recommended to ensure infrastructure risks are mitigated. Should electric buses be provided in North East Lincolnshire in the future, from an operational perspective it is vital they have a sufficient mileage range to ensure vehicles don't need to be changed mid service or charged halfway through a day. Should this occur, this could lead to local bus services becoming unreliable i.e. short notice cancellations or could lead to services running late.
- 2.2 Electric buses provide opportunities to reduce transport related emissions which in turn will support the marmot principles.
- 2.3 It is expected the provision of electric buses in North East Lincolnshire would not lead to any negative equality issues as new electric buses would need to meet existing vehicle legislation that relates to the provision of locally registered bus services.
- 2.4 As discussed in 1.4, Stagecoach East Midlands are in the process of delivering electric vehicles in Hull. Once the electric vehicles are in operation in Hull, they have offered to host a visit for Council Members.
- 2.5 It is also recommended the local authority continues to encourage bus operators through the Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership and through the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority to introduce new electric buses and the Council continues to seek external funding opportunities for electric buses.

3. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

It is not expected there are any reputational or communications issues associated with this report.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Electric buses will either need to be funded directly by local bus operators, through external funding bids or possibly through the Greater Lincolnshire Combined County Authority. If electric buses are funded through external funding bids in partnership with the Council, any Council capital or revenue funding which the Council is responsible for will need to be identified including the timescales for incurring expenditure.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

Local bus services support children and young people who due to their age may not have access to an alternative mode of transport. For example, bus services allow children and young people to access work, training and education.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is to provide scrutiny with an update relating to electric buses and there are no decisions being sought or implications on Climate Change or the Environment.

7. PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH INEQUALITIES AND MARMOT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Electric buses can support public transport accessibility and deliver reliable bus services to employment, education and healthcare facilities in North East Lincolnshire. Where local residents switch modes of travel away from private motor vehicles, there will be benefits in terms of air quality, transport related CO2 emissions and the quality of the local environment.

7.2 Public transport is key to improving health, reducing inequalities, and creating sustainable communities in line with Marmot principles.

8. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Monitoring Officer (Chief Legal Officer), Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

9. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All Wards could be impacted by the delivery of electric buses.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

11. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

11.1 Paul Evans, Assistant Director - Infrastructure, NELC, 01472 323029.

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