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Hitachi ZeroCarbon

It Will Take a Collaborative Ecosystem to Achieve Our Decarbonisation Ambitions

By Mike Nugent, Head of Hitachi ZeroCarbon EV



Decarbonisation is the number one challenge for bus fleet managers today.

Soon it will no longer be possible to buy new internal combustion engine buses and low-emission zone charges will make it increasingly costly to run them. The pressure is on to transition primarily to electric buses soon. However, there are significant challenges for fleet managers to overcome.

Effectively addressing the challenges of the climate crisis requires businesses, governments, finance

providers and communities to work together. First Bus is proving how this can work in practice.

First Bus is taking considerable strides to meet these challenges head-on and decarbonise its fleet. At its flagship Caledonia bus depot in Glasgow, the bus operator has transformed its depot into the UK's largest EV charging hub, with space to charge up to 300 electric buses at the site.

Leveraging funding from the Scottish Ultra-Low Emission Bus Scheme (SULEBS) and ScotZEB (Scottish Zero Emission Buses), Hitachi ZeroCarbon is delivering



an ‘as a service’ offering that includes bus batteries for First Bus’s fleet, smart charging software to manage and optimise the EV charging, and a decarbonisation programme that will explore low-carbon opportunities.

The depot also generates and consumes its own electricity via solar PV as well as meeting local community environmental, social and governance (ESG) needs by delivering zero-carbon charging hubs for use by other local businesses.

As a Principal Partner of COP26, Hitachi Europe played a pivotal role at the climate change conference and delivered a ‘Together for our planet’ event with First Bus at the Caledonia depot, reinforcing both companies’ commitment to lead the decarbonisation of public transport.

At the global climate change conference, First Bus set out its aim to offer local businesses use of the extensive electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure at its Caledonia Depot. One year on, DPD has become the first company to officially sign up to the scheme, enabled by Hitachi ZeroCarbon’s Plug and Charge solution that provides the availability of DC ultra-rapid charging for commercial electric vehicles.

Drivers of UK delivery company, DPD, have access to the site to charge their electric vehicles while in Glasgow, enabling them to travel a greater distance while making deliveries without impacting the environment. Through this arrangement, the green potential of First Bus’s charging hub will be maximised while its own electric fleet is out in service.

This is the kind of collaboration between businesses and local authorities that will be central to our

decarbonisation success. The key is building interoperability into everything we do, and shared charging hubs are the best example of how this could work in practice.

By opening up ecosystems of these hubs to a wider range of users, vehicles can be more intelligently charged, locations for charging and resources can be used more effectively and investment in charging infrastructure can be maximised. Interoperability is a guiding principle for the move to collaboration and one that needs to be considered across private and public sectors right from the very start.

Building an EV ecosystem requires an end-to-end decarbonisation plan, from the green power we put in, all the way to end-of-life battery recycling. Collaboration is vital, but like we are seeing at the Caledonia depot, businesses are already coming together to face the challenge head-on. And it’s making good business sense too.

Getting to net zero in the transport sector isn’t an overnight project. It will take years, however it will get easier, if we look to learn from each other and seek out opportunities to collaborate.

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