



Bus-News

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ISSUE ONE 2025

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Letter from the Editor



Dear Readers,

There have been changes afoot in the UK bus and coach sector. The GBP 2 fare cap on single bus journeys has been raised by 50 percent by the Labour government, while Greater Manchester's Bee Network has entered its final phase of bus franchising. It has maintained its GBP 2 fare cap and single fares allow passengers to transfer between Bee Network buses within one hour of purchase at no additional cost. In London, it's GBP 1.75 for unlimited travel within an hour.

In her piece *The Buzz Behind UK Bus Franchising*, Tiana May asks, "Now, with calls for reform growing louder, and Greater Manchester's Bee Network spearheading change, could franchising be the answer to improving bus services nationwide?" (p.6)

In December 2024, megabus announced it was axing most services in England and Wales due to 'low passenger demand', all while FlixBus has been growing its coach network in the

country. What might this mean for the UK coach market (p.32)?

Another change due to affect the UK coach market is the European Entry / Exit system, an EU system that is to be introduced. This system will require non-EU nationals travelling into the Schengen area to provide biometric data upon entry – meaning passengers will have to disembark from their coaches, causing delays and raising accessibility concerns (p.18).

In the United States, MTA has long fought to keep its buses moving by rolling out automated bus lane enforcement cameras on key routes in order to increase average bus speeds. Buses in the city. Another measure put in place in New York has been signal priority for buses.

Now, the MTA has implemented congestion pricing in Manhattan, causing a decline in total vehicle numbers. Joey Stoaate takes a look at how this has further impacted bus services in the city (p.10).

Please do get in touch with us if you have feedback or questions or want to talk to us about a contributing editorial for our magazine. Our email address is editorial@a2bglobalmedia.com.



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18–19 June 2025 | London

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15–18 June 2025 | Hamburg

Transport Ticketing Global
4–5 March 2025 | London

Ontario Transportation Expo
31 March–2 April 2025 | Toronto

Zero Emission Bus Conference
7–9 October 2025 | Brussels

mobility move
1–3 April 2025 | Berlin

CTAA Expo
2–4 June 2025 | San Diego

Transport Ticketing North America
24–25 June 2025 | Chicago

Electrical Energy Storage (EES)
6–9 May 2025 | Munich

ACT International Conference
3–6 August 2025 | New Orleans

Busworld Europe
4–9 October 2025 | Brussels





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London and Greater Manchester have been proving that franchised bus systems work. Can and should this model be implemented elsewhere in the UK?

p.10 The United States' First Step Towards Decongestion

At the start of 2025, Manhattan saw the Congestion Relief Zone come into effect, causing vehicle numbers into the Central Business District to decline significantly. What has this meant for the city's buses?

p.18 European Entry & Exit: A Future Concern

The European Union is planning on implementing an automated digital border system that will require every non-EU national travelling into the Schengen area to register biometric details upon arrival at a border point. How will this impact the UK coach industry?

p.32 The Impact of megabus' Retreat on UK Coach Travel

What does it mean for the UK coach market that megabus announced in late 2024 that it would be ceasing the majority of its coach services in England and Wales due to 'low passenger demand', while other operators are expanding their network?

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The Buzz Behind UK Bus Franchising

By Tiana May



As the UK aims to address long-standing challenges in delivering reliable and affordable public transport, bus franchising is gaining traction as a potential pathway forward. While London's franchised system has long been regarded as a model of success, much of the country currently operates under a deregulation framework introduced in the 1980s to reduce public spending and encourage competition. This framework included the abolition of Road Service Licensing in 1980 and the implementation of the Transport Act in 1985.

Now, with calls for reform growing louder, and Greater Manchester's Bee Network spearheading change, could franchising be the answer to improving bus services nationwide?

Deregulation

Outside London, deregulation has created a patchwork of services across the UK where private operators determine routes, timetables and fares based on commercial viability. While this has allowed some profitable routes to flourish, it has also led to a continued withdrawal of services in less lucrative areas, particularly in rural and suburban regions. Indeed, the Department for Transport (DfT) reported that 2,160 bus routes were cut between 2022 and 2023, representing a reduction of almost 20%.

Overall, passengers in deregulated areas often face fragmented networks, higher fares and a lack of



service reliability. Operators prioritise high-demand routes, leaving many communities without adequate public transport options. This has exacerbated social inequalities, as those without access to private vehicles struggle to reach jobs, education and healthcare.

To address this 'postcode lottery of buses', the nation's current government has introduced the Bus Services Bill, which will lift the ban on local authorities establishing their own bus companies. This will enable local authorities to take back control of services to prioritise passengers, rather than profitability. The bill will also empower local authorities to work alongside private operators to improve bus services in regions that do not pursue ownership.

In the meantime, the government is directly subsidising single bus fares across the country to help manage high fares, setting a **3 GBP national cap**, up from the previous government's 2 GBP initiative.

The London Model

In the capital, London's bus network operates under a franchised model overseen by Transport for London (TfL). Routes, timetables and fares are centrally

planned, while private operators bid to run services. This system aims to prioritise comprehensive coverage, fare consistency and integration with other transport modes.

In turn, London's buses see higher passenger satisfaction rates, frequent services and significant investment in modern vehicles, including an expanding fleet of electric buses. The simplicity of a unified fare system, including the Oyster card and contactless payments, has also been key to its success, with fares currently set at 1.75 GBP for unlimited bus journeys within an hour of first tapping in.

However, this success comes at a cost: London's bus network is heavily subsidised, with public funding playing a crucial role in maintaining its quality and accessibility. Replicating this model elsewhere may therefore not be financially viable without significant levels of investment, especially in areas where population and ridership are less concentrated.

Greater Manchester's Bee Network

Outside the capital, Greater Manchester's Bee Network is leading the way in bus franchising, replicating



© Transport for Greater Manchester



London’s model. With the **launch of the Bee Network’s final phase** in January 2025, Greater Manchester’s franchised system has brought all buses under local government control for the first time in decades. This scheme aims to deliver more integrated, affordable and reliable services that prioritise local needs.

The positive effects of this transition are reflected in key performance indicators. Ridership has risen, with nearly seven million additional journeys taken in the first year of the franchised system, representing a 5% increase. Passenger satisfaction has also improved thanks to increased reliability. For example, in summer 2024, the punctuality rate for phase one services reached 86.5%, up from 70.5% during the same period before franchising.

Notably, the Bee Network has also exceeded financial expectations, despite reducing fares for passengers. The initial phase of franchising generated over 20 million GBP in revenue during its first year – 3 million GBP more than originally budgeted. This success has been accompanied by operational efficiencies. Indeed, according to Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), franchised buses are a third cheaper to operate per kilometre compared to previously tendered services.

These savings have directly impacted the funding strategy for the network. The original planned increase in the Mayoral precept – set at 12.20 GBP for Band D properties in the 2021 business case for the network – has been reduced to 11 GBP. Although this additional tax funding remains necessary to support the continued operation of the network, the Bee Network’s early financial successes highlight the potential of franchising as a viable alternative to the traditional tendering process, particularly in populated city-regions such as Greater Manchester.

Expanding Bus Franchising

Following these positive outcomes in Greater Manchester, regions such as Liverpool City Region and West Yorkshire are also exploring franchising, encouraged by the new legislation that facilitates the transition. For example, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) recently outlined a potential franchising scheme that would see Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) take control of bus fares, timetables and routes while awarding contracts to private bus operators to run them. It is predicted that this

© Transport for Greater Manchester



transition to a franchised model would cost WMCA 22.5 million GBP over three years.

To support local authorities in making this switch, former UK Transport Secretary Louise Haigh, collaborated with Bee Network officials to explore best practices for replicating the franchised network elsewhere in the country. This initiative examined the legal, operational and logistical challenges that Greater Manchester faced in implementing its system, with it taking the city region six years to regain local control of its bus services, hindered by unnecessary barriers. The government thus aims to eliminate these obstacles, enabling faster and more efficient delivery of improved bus services nationwide.

Alongside legislative support, franchising undoubtedly requires sustained investment in infrastructure and services. Local authorities will need robust planning capabilities and clear lines of accountability to manage franchised networks effectively. Arguably, this demand may surpass available resources in smaller or less populated regions.

As city regions like Greater Manchester lead the way, franchising could mark a turning point in the evolution of UK bus services. However, success will undoubtedly depend on balancing the constraints of public funding with efficient service delivery. For the government to truly end the ‘postcode lottery’ of services, it must ensure that no communities are left behind in the journey towards enhanced public transport.

Read more from Tiana May [here](#).



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The United States' First Step Towards Decongestion

By Joey Stoate



MTA Chair & CEO Janno Lieber talks on first day of operation © Marc A. Hermann / MTA

On 5 January 2025, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) officially implemented the United States' very-first congestion pricing plan in the Manhattan Central Business District (CBD) of New York City.

The Central Business District Tolling Program, which was first declared as a requirement by the State in April 2019, is now in effect for any motorists entering Manhattan below 60th Street, which now is known not only as the CBD, but also the Congestion Relief Zone (CRZ).

Charges for motorists vary from 9 USD for passenger and small commercial vehicles during peak hours, to

4.50 USD for motorcycles travelling at the same time, with 80% of total revenue generated by the Tolling Program set to be invested on capital improvements on both NYC subways and buses. The remaining 20% is to be split between upgrades to the Metro-North Railroad and Long Island Rail Road, respectively.

The aims of the Tolling Program are both ambitious and crucial, with potential benefits ranging from a reduction in personal vehicles within the CBD/CRZ, an increase in public transit ridership and a reduction in carbon emissions, as well as the aforementioned funding for public transit improvement works.

Despite the successful rollouts of congestion pricing



plans in locations such as Rome, London and Singapore, the Tolling Program was, as was to be expected, not without its detractors. New Jersey Governor, Phil Murphy, stated to NorthJersey.com that the scheme was “Unfair and unpopular”, and a poll conducted by Siena College in the summer of 2024 found that 59% of voters were in favour of scrapping the scheme altogether.

The First Results

In the weeks following the Tolling Program’s implementation, the MTA has published a wealth of data showcasing several improvements as a result of the system’s introduction, with initial statistics indicating significant changes to traffic, travel times for drivers, bus journey trip times and an overall increase in transit ridership.

Data provided by non-profit transportation coalition TRANSCOM shows that, thus far, the CRZ has seen an overall reduction of 1 million vehicles entering the area, a total decrease of around 40% based on an estimated baseline across the whole of January.

Improvements also include a 48% reduction in travel times for those travelling into the CBD using the Holland Tunnel (EB) during peak hours, with both Williamsburg and Queensboro Bridge entry routes seeing a reduction of roughly 30% on average during peak morning hours.

Bus ridership numbers across the area’s weekend express services have seen a 21% increase, with a bump of 7% on non-express routes. Weekday express ridership has also risen by 6% overall, and ridership on the X27 bus route travelling from Bay Ridge to Manhattan has grown by 15% on weekdays and 55% on weekends.

Several bus routes have seen improvements in journey times, including those crossing either the East or Hudson Rivers into the CRZ, with the MTA stating a reduction of 1.3 minutes on the M50, 5% of its total trip time.

Elsewhere, data collected by Crashmapper and reported on Streetsblog NYC has found that the total number of collisions in the area have reduced by 55% year-on-year within the first three weeks of implementation, with a 51% reduction in overall injuries.

With the initial numbers provided by the MTA, it is clear to see that the implementation of the Tolling Program has, despite its relative infancy, already led to significant improvements to a plethora of key issues causing traffic congestion in the area.

The Future

With early data showcasing the success of the MTA’s implementation of the plan in New York, it could be argued that further expansion should not only be





possible, but inevitable. However, with a significant change in the governing party in the United States comes an entirely different set of circumstances.

On 19 February, the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT) published a letter penned by current United States Transportation Secretary, Sean P. Duffy, in which the Federal Highway Administration called for the complete termination of the project on grounds of it running contrary to an agreement previously signed under the Value Pricing Program (VPPP), among other alleged causes for concern.

The DOT's withdrawal from the project has, of course, been endorsed by President Trump, prompting a swift response from New York City Governor, Kathy Hochul, who has in turn filed an immediate lawsuit against the DOT, stating that the programme would not be halted until such time as a verdict was delivered by a judge.

In a different time, these were not points of such contention. In 2007, the DOT itself announced intentions to initiate congestion pricing plans for State Route 520 (Seattle), Interstate 95 (Miami/Ft. Lauderdale), Interstate 35W (Minneapolis), The Golden

Gate Bridge (San Francisco) and a variable parking meter system in both Chicago and Los Angeles County.

Of the proposed projects, the closest to receiving the full implementation of a pricing plan was San Francisco, which saw proposals from the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) in 2008 to reduce congestion within central locations in the city through the introduction of a scheme not unlike the one implemented in New York. The project, which saw several plans drafted to near completion, was put on indefinite hold following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, there are no plans for this scheme to be re-examined, let alone introduced into operation. However, given the overwhelmingly positive results from New York, perhaps one day the move will be made. Maybe in four years.

Keep up to date with everything happening in the bus sector by visiting our website.



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Move People, Not Batteries: The Game-Changing Public Transport Solution Hidden Beneath Your Feet

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Electrification & Power

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Move People, Not Batteries: The Game-Changing Public Transport Solution Hidden Beneath Your Feet

At Braunschweig train station



Cities around the world are working to reduce carbon emissions, enhance air quality and create more liveable urban spaces.

Electric buses have become a symbol of this transformation – silent, clean and capable of replacing diesel fleets. But behind the scenes, considerable hurdles remain for cities that want their own buses to be sustainable and practical for everyday work.

Oversized batteries, costly infrastructure, grid overload and limited urban space are just a few challenges that

city planners and transport operators must navigate. Yet, amidst these challenges, one approach is reshaping how cities electrify their bus fleets: opportunity charging.

Two Approaches to Opportunity Charging

Opportunity charging rethinks how buses are powered by enabling them to recharge during short, scheduled stops throughout the day. Instead of relying on large batteries that require long charging sessions at depots, buses can “top up” on the way.



There are two main methods of opportunity charging:

1. **Overhead charging system or pantograph charging:** Mechanical arms connect buses to overhead chargers for rapid, high-power charging at stops. Widely used, but visible infrastructure and moving parts can require more maintenance and impact urban aesthetics.
2. **Wireless opportunity charging:** High-power energy is transferred wirelessly through pads embedded in the ground and a receiver under the vehicle. This contactless, low-maintenance system integrates seamlessly into urban environments, though it is less widely recognised than pantograph systems.

Both approaches aim to solve the same problem: enabling efficient, on-the-go charging for electric buses. However, wireless opportunity charging offers unique advantages, particularly in terms of durability, aesthetics and ease of integration.

Proven Technology Since 2002

Wireless opportunity charging might seem like a recent innovation, but it has operated successfully for over two decades. It began in 2002 in Genoa, Italy, where ENRX, formerly IPT Technology GmbH, introduced its first inductive charging system, paving the way for cities worldwide to adopt this transformative technology.

Today, ENRX systems are operational in 14 projects across Europe, highlighting their scalability, reliability and adaptability in diverse environments. Key examples include:

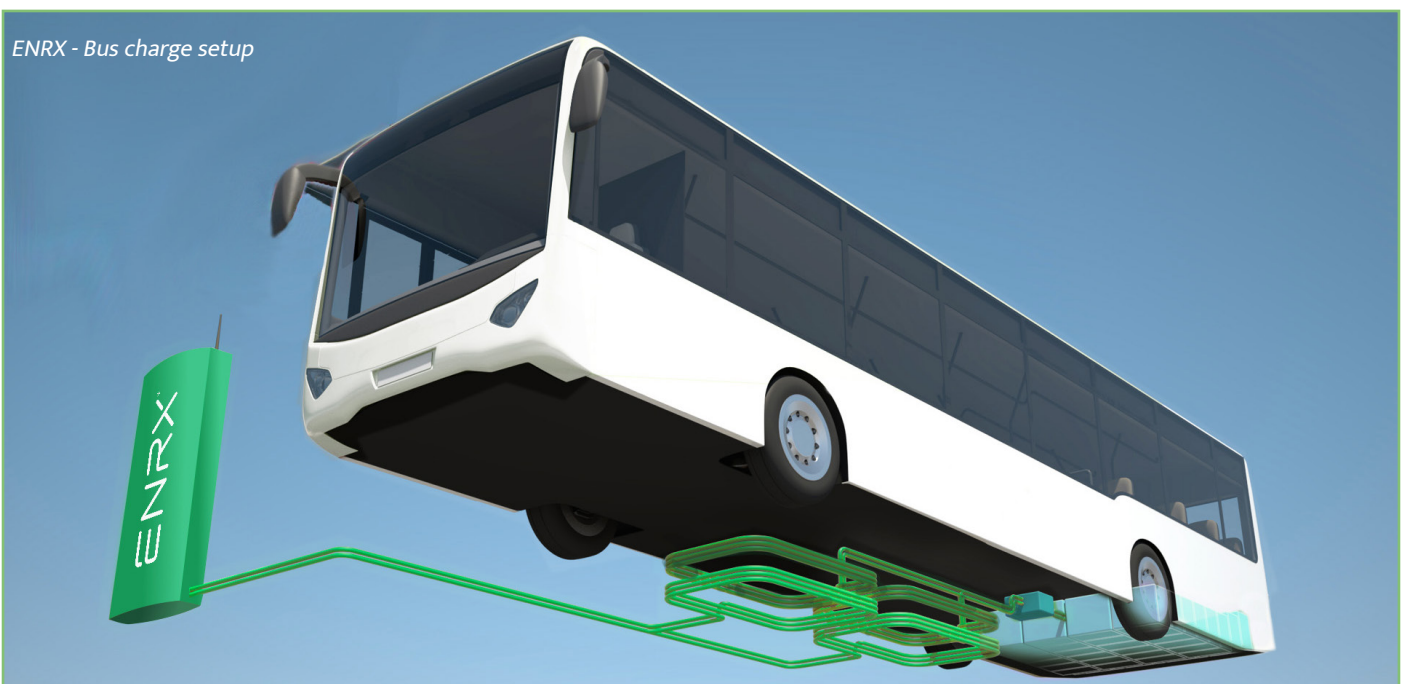
- **London, UK:** Wireless charging systems powered three double-decker buses, each delivering up to 100kW in a test pilot from 2015 to 2020
- **Genoa, Italy:** A pioneer in 2002, deploying eight buses equipped with wireless charging technology
- **Turin, Italy:** In 2004, Turin installed inductive charging pads for 23 electric buses
- **Madrid, Spain:** In 2018, five buses equipped with 100kW inductive systems began operation
- **Fredrikstad, Norway:** Inductive charging supports four e-ferries, demonstrating its applicability beyond buses

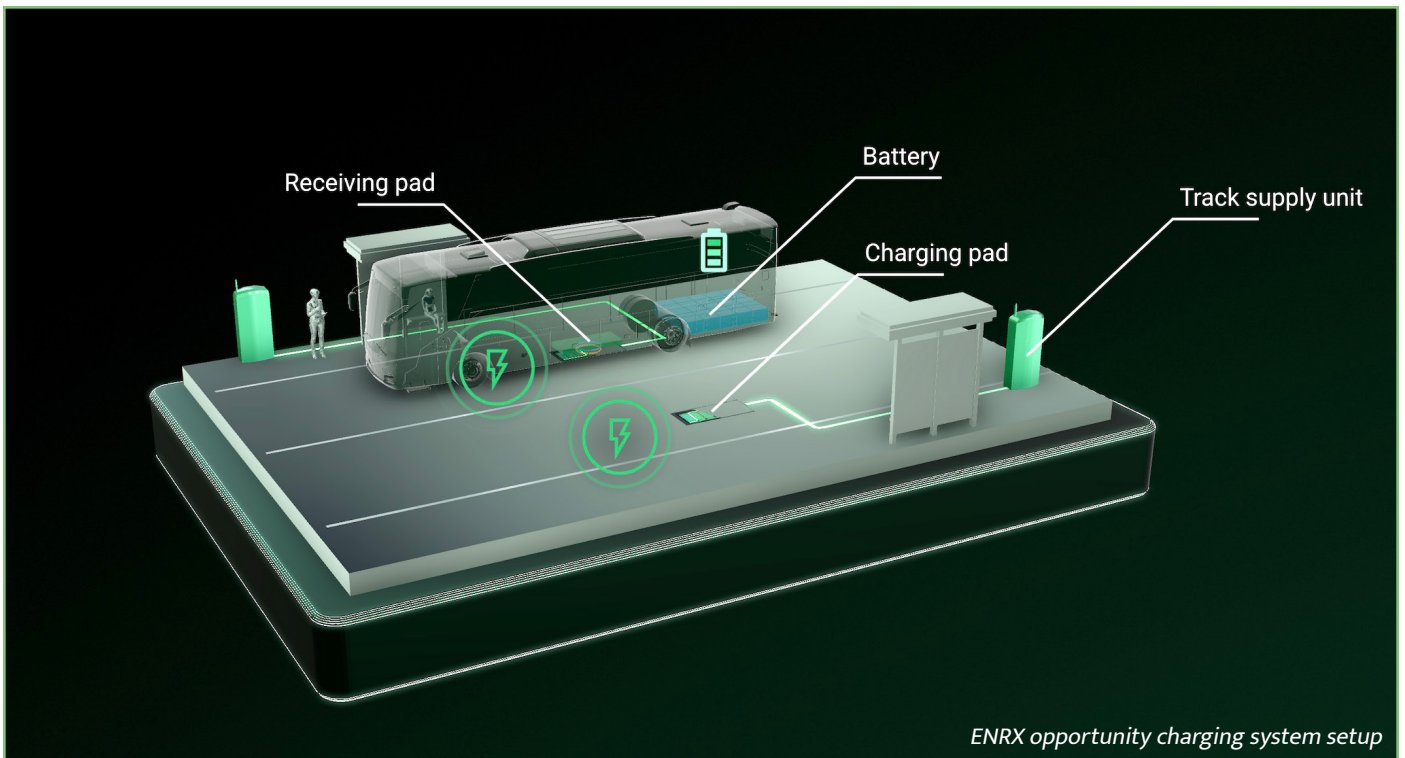
Collectively, ENRX systems have powered electric buses for over 30 million kilometres and e-ferries for more than 300,000 kilometres, demonstrating their reliability in daily operations. While not yet adopted universally, ENRX's wireless opportunity charging has proven to be a mature and effective solution where implemented.

How It Works and Why It Matters

The concept of wireless energy transfer dates to Nikola Tesla's groundbreaking work in the 19th century. It's a principle we use daily for charging devices like

ENRX - Bus charge setup





ENRX opportunity charging system setup

smartphones and electric toothbrushes – and for over 20 years, it has been delivering heavy-duty, high-power energy transfer for applications ranging from electric buses and trucks to industrial systems like forklifts and automated guided vehicles (AGVs).

Wireless opportunity charging uses magnetic resonance to transfer energy between charging pads embedded in the ground and receivers on buses. When a bus stops above a pad, a magnetic field creates an electric current in the receiver, seamlessly charging the vehicle’s battery.

This contactless system requires no plugs or connectors, operates automatically and integrates invisibly into urban infrastructure. Reliable in all weather conditions – from rain to snow and sand – it delivers maximum power within a second of activation, maintaining a constant energy flow without peak loads or power fluctuations.

Success Stories: Decades of Performance

Turin, Italy: Leading the Way Since 2004

Turin adopted wireless charging in 2004, installing charging pads at key stops for its fleet of 23 electric

buses. Over 17 years of operation, the results speak for themselves:

- **Battery longevity:** By maintaining batteries at optimal charge levels (30–80%), no replacements were needed during the project
- **Operational reliability:** Buses covered up to 200 kilometres daily with frequent, short charging stops
- **Cost efficiency:** Despite higher upfront costs, the system achieved a lower total cost of ownership than both diesel and conductively charged electric buses

Braunschweig, Germany: A Benchmark for Sustainability

Since 2014, Braunschweig has relied on ENRX’s Primove 200kW inductive charging system to power its fleet of five e-buses: one 12-metre bus with a 60kWh battery and four 18-metre articulated buses with 90kWh batteries. By 2025, these buses will have travelled over 4.5 million kilometres, reducing CO2 emissions by nearly 3,000 tonnes.

This showcases how wireless opportunity charging combines high power and compact battery systems to deliver diesel-equivalent performance with significant environmental and operational benefits.



Economic and Operational Advantages

Wireless opportunity charging doesn't just address operational challenges– it transforms the economics of fleet electrification. By enabling cities to rethink how buses are powered, this technology offers tangible financial benefits:

- **Smaller batteries:** Frequent charging reduces the need for oversized batteries, cutting costs by up to 50%
- **Extended battery life:** Charging at optimal levels minimises battery degradation, reducing replacement frequency
- **Lower maintenance costs:** Inductive systems, with no moving parts, significantly reduce wear and tear, cutting annual maintenance costs compared to overhead charging systems, which can reach 10–15% of their purchase value
- **Optimised infrastructure:** Embedded charging pads require less space and smaller grid connections, lowering installation costs
- **Continuous operations:** En-route charging enables buses to operate 24/7, minimising downtime and reducing the need for additional vehicles to maintain service levels
- **Workforce efficiency:** By eliminating depot detours, drivers and staff can focus their time and resources on public transport operations

Addressing Scepticism

Despite its proven history, wireless opportunity charging sometimes faces questions about its efficiency and scalability. Here's how it performs:

- **Efficiency:** Wireless systems achieve over 92% efficiency and start charging instantly at full power, delivering 3.33kWh in a 1-minute stop with 200kW. In contrast, a 300kW pantograph system charges for a maximum of 30 seconds due to connection and disconnection time caused by moving parts, delivering 2.5kWh.
- **Safety:** Systems comply with ICNIRP 2010 guidelines, with emissions far below the 27µT threshold. ENRX systems operate at just 3.18µT, ensuring safety for drivers, passengers and pedestrians.
- **Standardisation:** Ongoing efforts like the SAE

J2954/2 standard for heavy-duty vehicles and collaborations between industry leaders are ensuring compatibility across manufacturers, supporting seamless integration and broader adoption.

- **Power capacity:** Charging speeds up to 300kW enable rapid top-ups during short stops, keeping buses on schedule.

These features, combined with real-world success, make wireless charging a trusted solution for modern urban transport.

A Vision for the Future

Imagine a city where buses glide silently through the streets, seamlessly charging at stops without cables, connectors or bulky infrastructure. This isn't a distant vision– it's already happening in cities like Braunschweig and Madrid.

By adopting wireless opportunity charging, cities unlock a cleaner, more efficient future for public transport. This proven technology helps overcome electrification challenges while creating quieter, greener environments.

The future of public transport isn't about waiting for breakthroughs. It's here – and powered by wireless opportunity charging.

Visit www.enrx.com to find out more.

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European Entry & Exit: A Future Concern

By Joey Stoate



Coach Travel © Canva

In a time of great change, the economy in the United Kingdom is a topic of fierce debate and deliberation.

With industry performance fluctuating and the looming possibility of nationalisation, one of the largest financial contributors to the current landscape is the coach sector.

With 450 million individual passenger trips each year, the sector alone employs 54,000 people across the UK, many of whom are situated in rural areas of the country. Not only this, but statistics provided by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) state that coach passengers spend up to 5.4 billion GBP within the

country each year, with a further 8.3 billion GBP being spent as a whole in local economies as a direct result, and a further 610 million GBP spent by inbound tourists whilst in the country.

Consideration, Regulation and Cooperation

With the sector proving to be a key player within the UK's economy, it is clear that coach travel is not only surviving, but thriving.

However, amidst a time of what could be considered to



be a time of great prosperity for the sector as a whole, one key stumbling block remains firmly fixed on the horizon: the inevitable introduction of the European Entry/Exit System (EES).

The European Entry/Exit System

The EES is a new, automated digital border system that, when introduced, will require each and every non-EU national passenger travelling to the Schengen area for a short stay (up to 90 days in any 180-day period) to register biometric details (such as fingerprints or a photograph) upon their arrival at a border control point, replacing the long-standing system of passport stamp verification.

When completed, a digital record will then last for the next three years, with passengers required to present a previously recorded piece of biometric data upon entry within the Schengen area on each subsequent visit.

After three years, passengers will be required to re-register on their next trip, thus needing to provide new biometric details after each record expiry date.

For the purposes of the EES, a non-EU national passenger is defined as a traveller not holding nationality in any European Union country or the nationality of Iceland, Switzerland, Norway or Liechtenstein.

The European Travel Information and Authorisation System

Six months after the implementation of EES, we will see the roll-out of the new European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which is a separate electronic travel authorisation system modelled on a US framework for visitors from non-EU territories. The system will check the security credentials of travellers visiting the EU for business, tourism, medical or transit purposes, with each traveller obliged to pay a fee on each visit unless they are currently allowed to visit visa-free. These travellers will also be exempt from any digital security screening.

The two systems, which were first introduced as part of the Security Union and form part of a wider scheme implemented by the EU to strengthen border security, aim to aid the success of objectives put forward within the European Agenda on Security, as well as the European Agenda on Migration.

Further information on the implementation of both systems was previously due to arrive by the end of November 2024. However, current estimates provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) predict the system to complete its proposed phased implementation by the end of November 2025 following another significant delay.



Dover Port © Canva



What Does It Mean for the Coach Tourism Industry?

When it comes to the implementation of EES, there are a number of key concerns plaguing those closely tied with the industry.

Potential difficulties include yet-to-be-defined internal EU regulations, changes concerning connecting journeys and the chances of lengthy delays the new system may cause on a consistent basis, not to mention the difficulty in supporting the exit & re-boarding of disabled passengers when travelling through ports presenting issues for both staffing and passenger comfort.

With each passenger required to leave the vehicle, have biometric data scanned, verified and then re-board the bus, it's clear to see that not only are delays possible, but they are absolutely inevitable. Whilst official guidelines state that each transaction can be completed in 76 seconds, this can merely be considered a baseline number, not taking into account any time taken to aid disabled passengers both off and onto coaches.

With this in mind, thoughts must be turned to the cost of such delays. With vehicle waiting times at ports looking to be considerably extended, consideration will need to be taken to properly determine the effect

that this will have on pay rates, driver availability and scheduling. Whilst the current system can produce delays, the time-cost of these new rules alone is astronomical, let alone the monetary cost.

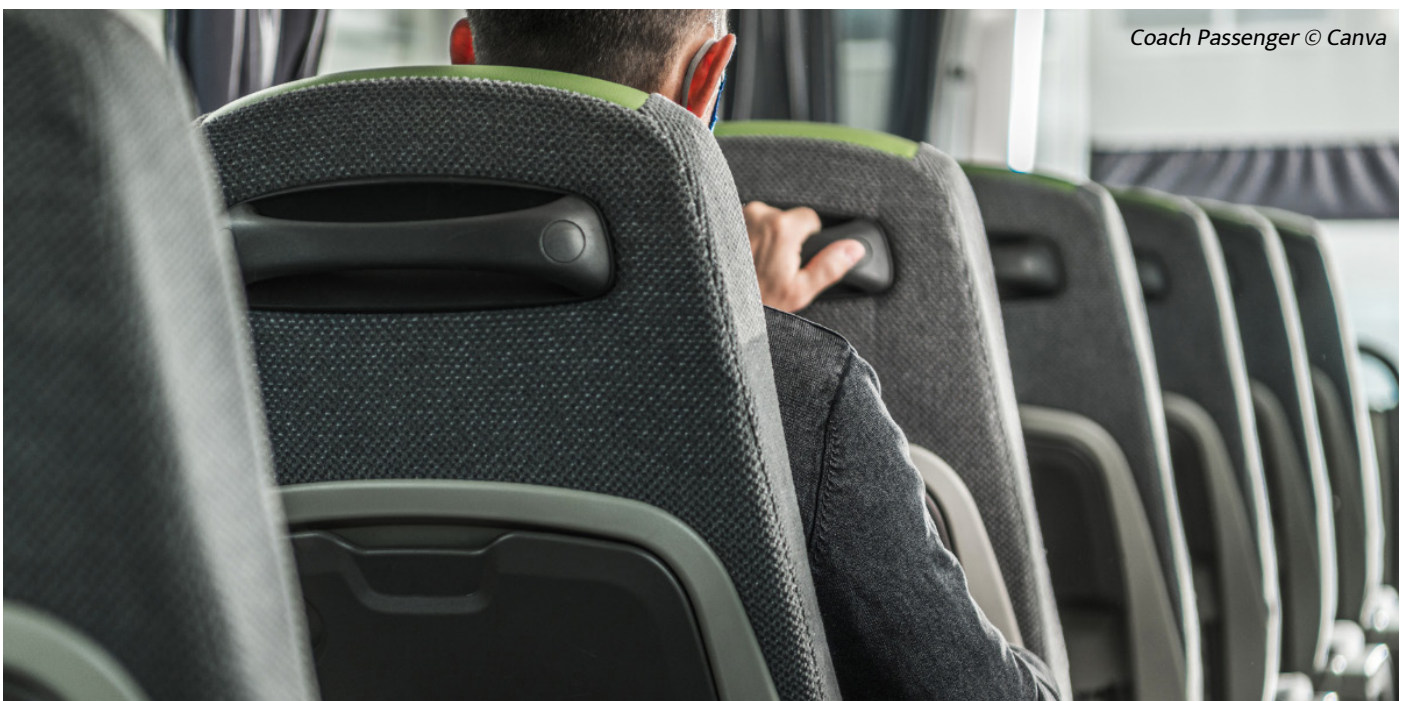
With little information yet having been presented from mainstream sources; a comprehensive, visible campaign will be crucial for public understanding and compliance, with the possible headaches the system could cause remaining a significant cause for concern amongst industry figureheads, and with passengers themselves wholly responsible for their own registration within the system, considerations must be made for those unable or, in some cases, unwilling, to conform to the system.

Be Prepared

With an implementation date due at any moment, it is extremely clear that sufficient preparations must be made by coach operators across the country in order to ensure a smooth transition to the new EES & ETIAS, regardless of the obligations being passed onto travelling customers.

Customers must be informed, systems must be finalised and work must be carried out, fast.

At a time in which the industry provides the country's economy with such consistent support, a break in service could cripple not only the sector, but have a huge knock-on effect on the UK as a whole.



Coach Passenger © Canva



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Introducing Ferdia: Your Modernisation Partner



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AI is transforming every aspect of automotive technology, enhancing safety, efficiency and user experience.

As a leader in high-performance automotive computing platforms, ADLINK empowers car developers with innovative solutions tailored to meet the unique and evolving demands of the industry.

With the increasing adoption of smart cockpit penetration rates in new vehicles, ADLINK ensures its platforms deliver integrated, intuitive and

connected in-car experiences, providing immersive cabin experiences. By bridging the gap between current automotive technologies and the future of transportation, ADLINK remains committed to driving innovation and excellence in the industry.

Unlock Level 4 Autonomy with High-Performance Computing ECUs

The evolution of autonomous driving technologies is driven by advancements in AI, sensor development, automotive software, and infrastructure. From a



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vehicle hardware perspective, higher-level vehicles use significantly more sensors. For instance, some Level 4 autonomous vehicles use up to 40 perception sensors, requiring high computing power to process the large volumes of data they generate.

ADLINK's automotive driving platform, the **ADM-AL30**, embodies various features and engineering enhancements specifically designed to meet the demands of Level 4 solutions. Powered by the Intel® 12th Gen Core™ I processor and NVIDIA RTX 4000 SFF Ada, the system provides powerful data processing capability and real-time sensor fusion across camera, LiDAR and radar inputs. It incorporates 2x 10G Base-T Ethernet ports and 8x 1G Automotive Ethernet (Base T1) ports, offering cost-effective, lightweight cabling and high bandwidth for seamless imaging and sensor data processing. Additionally, the ADM-AL30 features 4x CAN 2.0 and 8x optional CAN FD ports, which are essential for reliable in-vehicle communication. It is E-Mark certified and has been successfully deployed by our partner, TIER IV, with hundreds of units in use, showing its proven reliability. Furthermore, it supports open-source autonomous driving software, such as Autoware, enhancing development flexibility.

Learn more about the collaboration between ADLINK & TIER IV

Fleet Management-Ready Solution for Commercial Vehicles

In addition to high-level self-driving technology, the advancement of Level 2 ADAS functions and relevant applications, such as fleet management, is experiencing significant growth. ADLINK's **ADM-TJ30** AI-ADAS

solution stands out as one of the most integrated solutions for commercial vehicles, seamlessly incorporating ADAS functionalities.

With a single ECU connected to up to eight cameras, it offers functions like Around-View Monitoring, Blind Spot Detection, Forward Collision Warning and Driver Monitoring. This allows fleets to comply with current UN regulations, including UN R130, R131 and R151, while streamlining supply chain management by letting users work with a single vendor.

For enhanced fleet tracking and optimisation, vehicle-to-cloud connectivity is essential. The **ADM-IM10** is a compact in-vehicle telematics gateway designed to meet diverse communication needs. With E-Mark (12V/24V) compliance and ISO-7637-2 automotive certification, this gateway ensures reliability and safety. In collaboration with **Carota**, a leading software company specialising in OTA and fleet management solutions, ADLINK showcases the Fleet Management-Ready Solution. This solution facilitates remote diagnostics and over-the-air updates for fleet maintenance, as well as real-time tracking and event video analysis to enhance driver safety.

Steer Into Immersive Control with the Smart Cockpit Domain Controller

The adoption of smart cockpits in new cars is significantly increasing, making them a key trend in today's automotive technology development. ADLINK fosters smart cockpit innovation in partnership with AUO, a leading display manufacturer. ADLINK's cockpit domain controllers are powered by Qualcomm SoCs, offering outstanding computing capability and



Drive into the Future with ADM: ADLINK's Automotive Solutions

seamlessly integrating digital dashboards, human-machine interfaces (HMIs), head-up displays (HUDs) and in-car infotainment systems, providing a user-friendly and immersive driving experience for future mobility. It supports more than 3 display connections and up to 6 channels of camera connections, meeting most of the mainstream industry demands.

ADLINK ensures excellence in automotive manufacturing by aligning its production capabilities with industry standards. Its automotive-grade production line is certified to IATF-16949 and features Tier 1-ready production with cutting-edge equipment, a class 100,000 cleanroom and a no-touch process. Its high-mix, low-volume manufacturing ensures tailored, reliable and safe solutions for diverse automotive applications.

The development of AI for safer, more efficient and more personalised driving experiences is significantly changing the automotive industry. By providing automotive-grade computing hardware, ADLINK is dedicated to improving not only safety and efficiency but also delivering immersive in-cabin experiences.

Visit the **ADLINK website** or contact us at nca_marketing@adlinktech.com to learn more





Snapper Services

On-Time Performance: A Global Perspective

By Miki Szikszai, CEO of Snapper Services

Punctuality is fundamental for a reliable public transport system. For passengers, it builds trust and encourages preference for buses over private vehicles. For operators, on-time performance (OTP) reflects service quality and network reliability.

At Snapper Services, we've launched the **Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index (GPTI)** to help transport authorities and operators answer key questions: what does excellence in OTP look like? How can networks improve over time? And, crucially, what can we learn from each other to foster continuous improvement in public transport?

A New Approach to Benchmarking Performance

In public transport, we're constantly looking for ways to improve. However, the process of learning from one another isn't always straightforward. Different cities operate under varying regulations, employ different OTP definitions and set unique performance thresholds. Comparing performance often feels like comparing apples and oranges, especially when conventional benchmarking tools only offer static, one-off snapshots of performance.

That's where the Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index comes in. By processing open data from global transport networks, we've created a referenceable resource for the industry. Operators and authorities can



Miki Szikszai,
CEO of Snapper Services

now compare how their networks measure up under shared standards, identify areas for improvement and accelerate a culture of continuous improvement through meaningful comparisons.

This isn't just about measuring performance – it's about enabling ongoing refinement and incremental progress. The goal is to help transport operators and authorities harness data for long-term sustained growth.

The Challenge of Defining 'On Time'

One of the most interesting insights we've uncovered is how differently OTP is defined across the world. While passengers universally want their bus to be on time, the definition of 'on-time' can vary significantly. Some networks allow a wider range of early or late arrivals, while others set much tighter thresholds, reflecting the priorities of each city.



In cities with a high share of commuters, public transport often faces stricter political and funding pressure, resulting in more stringent performance standards. In less dense areas, however, expectations can be more lenient.

With the Mosaiq Global PT Index, we help operators and authorities understand how their network would compare under different conditions, creating opportunities for continuous improvement across diverse environments. This makes it easier to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to learn.

Making Data Work for Everyone

For public transport to truly transform, data must be accessible and actionable. The Mosaiq platform processes tens of millions of bus trips every month, turning complex data into clear and actionable insights. This helps operators and authorities identify areas for improvement, track trends over time and make data-driven decisions that enhance service delivery.

Take first stop OTP for example, answering the question: did the bus journey start on time? A detail which can have a significant impact on passenger trust. By comparing first-stop OTP across various networks, operators and authorities can identify areas for improvement and drive continuous enhancements in punctuality.

By providing this data in a shared, comparative framework, we aim to promote a global culture of learning and collaboration. The goal isn't just to measure but to enable operators and authorities to act on insights, turning those into concrete, sustained improvements.

Expanding the Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index to England

Our next edition of the Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index, due to be released in early 2025, will include regions from across England, allowing local authorities and operators to compare their performance with each other and international benchmarks, adopting the most relevant practices from cities around the world.

Already we're seeing great progress in places like West Yorkshire, where the Mosaiq platform is helping operators and local authorities collaborate to improve



performance and work together to roll out a franchised network. With the index, we can build on this foundation, offering even more tools to deliver reliable, efficient services that passengers can count on.

The Index will expand on this foundation, offering another lens for transport authorities and operators to drive continuous improvement, reduce operational inefficiencies and deliver better outcomes for passengers. With the shift to franchising gathering pace, there is no better time to learn from each other to ensure that the customer experience is at the centre of this transition.

A Tool for Transformation

At its core the Mosaiq Global PT Index isn't just about metrics, it's about passengers. When operators and authorities consistently deliver on-time services, they build trust, loyalty and satisfaction.

As we expand the Mosaiq Global PT Index to include more cities and regions, the potential for collaboration only grows. Our vision is clear: a public transport industry where data drives meaningful decisions, and every passenger benefits from a system that's reliable, efficient and designed with them in mind.

Would you like to see how your on-time performance compares? Make sure to download the Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index at mosaiq.co to find out more.

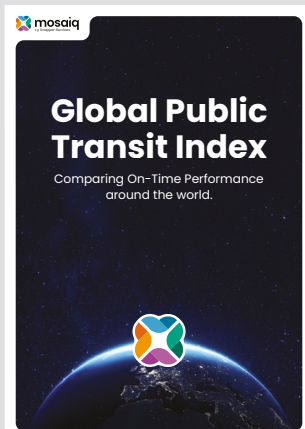
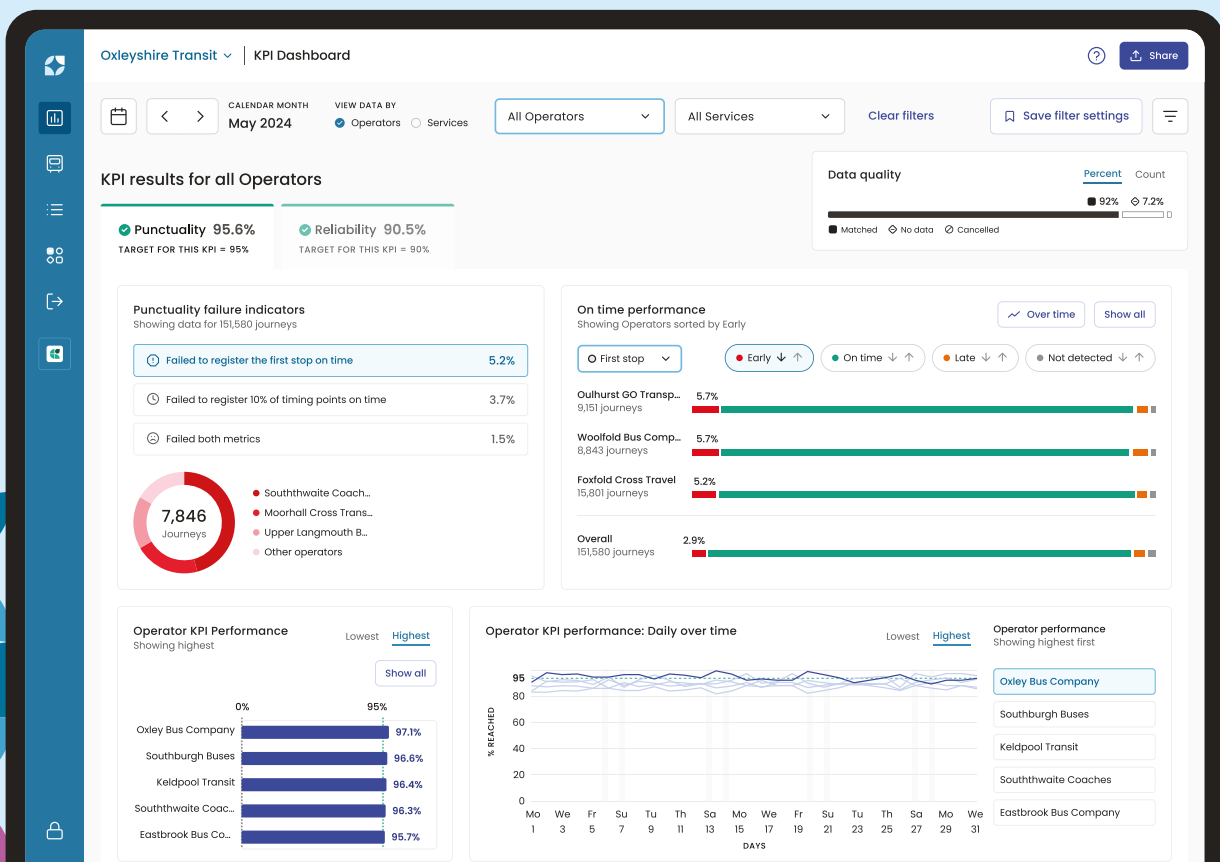


mosaiq
by Snapper Services

Transit intelligence made easy.

Transform your public transit data into the intelligence you need to continually make positive improvements. Simply.

[Book a demo at mosaiq.co](https://mosaiq.co)



Downloaded our Global PT Index yet?

The Mosaiq Global Public Transit Index uses publicly available data to build referenceable insights, including On-Time Performance, and benchmarks these for public transit authorities around the world. Download the report or sign up for the next release here.





🏠 Directory

Digital Solutions



Ferdia

Introducing Ferdia: Your Modernisation Partner



Technology provider Ferdia is on a mission to modernise the coach industry.

When first introduced to the sector as a management consultant for Oslobuss, Company Founder and CEO, Håkon Sæther, was shocked to see how reliant coach operators were on manual processes and old, outdated management systems.

Having moved over from the telecom industry, his mindset was that technology enabled businesses to communicate better and work smarter, but what he found was an industry yet to fully embrace this.

“It was like this industry was still using a ‘brick’ phone while everyone else had moved on to smartphones.”

But I understood that technology could help coach operators work much smarter and so we began looking around Norway, Sweden and Denmark to see what smart solutions were available.

“All we found, however, were providers offering ‘old-school’ software solutions that were based on dated technology. We therefore decided to launch a company that developed the technical solutions that Oslobuss – and the rest of the industry – would need to grow and succeed.”

Using a system Ferdia developed, Oslobuss went on to outperform its competitors, and the solutions provider caught the attention of leading national coach operators across Scandinavia and has now expanded into the UK.



“The first time I came over to the UK, I found a similar picture to that of Scandinavia and so now I’m working to renew and re-energise UK coach operations,” Sæther enthuses.

Automate and Streamline Coach Operations

Today Ferdia offers an advanced cloud-based solution that automates and streamlines daily operations. One of its key aims is to give customers a better experience. This is achieved in a number of ways, including enabling travel managers and passengers to see where a vehicle is at any given time.

“Today we can access our banks and make transactions online, order meals, pretty much get anything done on our phones, but until recently you couldn’t see where your coach was or find out whether it’s running on time,” Sæther points out.

Another benefit to Ferdia’s solution is a reduction in manual work and improved efficiencies.

Key Ferdia Facts:

- Founded in 2016, inspired by the needs of the coach company Oslobuss
- Headquartered in Oslo, Norway
- Team of 20 full-time developers
- Current ambassadors include leading coach companies in Norway, Sweden and Denmark
- Ongoing launch in the UK, with three customers already on board

“Processes are automated, and our proactive intelligence system analyses data to help you make the best decisions at any given time. We’re also developing an auto-planning feature, which we hope to deploy this summer. No longer will planning managers have to spend hours each day scheduling, assigning vehicles and drivers – with a click of a button, the system will suggest a plan for you.

“The manager then only has to verify and adjust it if necessary, saving hours of manual work and, in addition, optimising the use of your fleet,” Sæther says.





Coach Business as It Should Be

Boost Efficiency

Automate manual tasks, streamline processes and eliminate inefficiencies to make everyday operations simpler and more cost-effective.

Increase Profitability

Win more contracts, improve margins and unlock growth potential with solutions that give you a competitive edge.

Add More Value for Your Customers

Deliver seamless experiences that enhance loyalty and create a better journey for your customers – ensuring they come back again and again.

Futureproof Your Business

Stay ahead of the competition with scalable, adaptable tools designed to meet tomorrow’s challenges.

We Help You Succeed

Ferdia works as your partner – listening, educating and co-creating success that meets your needs every step of the way.

He also claims that Ferdia’s solution enables coach operators to win contracts with higher margins, as these features help you to stand out from the competition.

“Everyone else is offering the same product, but there you are, able to better organise travel, simplify planning and provide full visibility of your vehicles. What we’re seeing in Norway is if you identify the customers that want this – such as tour operators or conference organisers – they’re willing to pay a bit more as you’re offering added value.”

More than a Provider, a Partner

Ferdia’s goal is to help operators be successful and have better margins, but Sæther knows that if you just give an organisation a new digital tool, that doesn't necessarily mean they'll become more efficient.

They need guidance, he says, especially coach operators, who may be less used to change and digitalisation. Therefore, operators should look at

The Ferdia Manifesto

The coach industry isn't resistant to change – it's just cautious and held back by outdated ways of working. For too long, traditional practices have halted progress, which has resulted in inefficiencies, missed opportunities and customers who don't get the experience they deserve.

It's time to embrace a new way forward, renewing how this industry operates.

At Ferdia, we believe in making things simple, effective and impactful. We're not just offering tools – we're empowering coach businesses to work smarter, grow faster and add more value to their customers.

Because thriving in today's world isn't about keeping up – it's about leading the way. And with Ferdia by your side, that's exactly what you'll do. Don't be a dinosaur. Build the coach business of tomorrow.



Ferdia Customer Testimonial

“We have doubled our turnover and multiplied our financial result by 10. Ferdia’s IT platform helps us to work more efficiently, earning twice the revenue per bus compared to industry average.”

“We also win increasingly more customers and contracts as a result of new digital solutions.”

Svein Busch Iversen, Owner, Oslobuss

“We’re always actively developing our system. We have 20 full-time developers and launch new features every third week to keep improving on what we’ve got.”

“Our system is good, but it can always be better, and so we continue to work closely with operators so we understand their world, their needs and can develop the solutions that help them to further succeed.”

Are You Ready for Change?

Having led the revolution in Scandinavia, Ferdia is now expanding its footprint in the UK and looking to partner with new coach operators eager to see how digitalisation can benefit them.

“We’re inviting operators to join us on this journey of modernisation. We appreciate not every company is ready for change, but for those that are, we’re here to work with you to create a better, smarter way of working,” Sæther concludes.

www.ferdia.uk

Ferdia as a partner, rather than a technology provider, as the organisation is there to offer coaching and ongoing support.

It’s very much a symbiotic relationship, where both parties benefit and can grow, Sæther goes on to highlight.

“For example, in Scandinavia we’ve created an advisory board, and we regularly invite the largest coach operators to Oslo for the day to discuss what’s going on in the industry, our strategy and plans for development and get their feedback. We’re partners with a common goal – to modernise the industry.”

He adds that every six weeks Ferdia also holds user forums where customers can join a Teams meeting and share their questions, concerns and what they’d like to see from the system.

Contact Ferdia

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CEO & Account Manager UK

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The Impact of megabus' Retreat on UK Coach Travel

By Tiana May



A megabus service in London © megabus

On 4 December 2024, **megabus cut the majority of its coach services** in England and Wales due to "low passenger demand." From this date, the company ceased most of its operations, leading to the withdrawal of 15 routes across these regions. megabus now focuses solely on operations in Scotland, cross-border routes linking Scotland with England and Wales, and the Falcon service connecting Plymouth and Bristol.

This decision has reduced options for passengers seeking affordable long-distance travel: a blow that may be particularly heavy due to the rising price of rail travel, alongside ongoing reliability concerns with train services due to strikes and service disruptions.

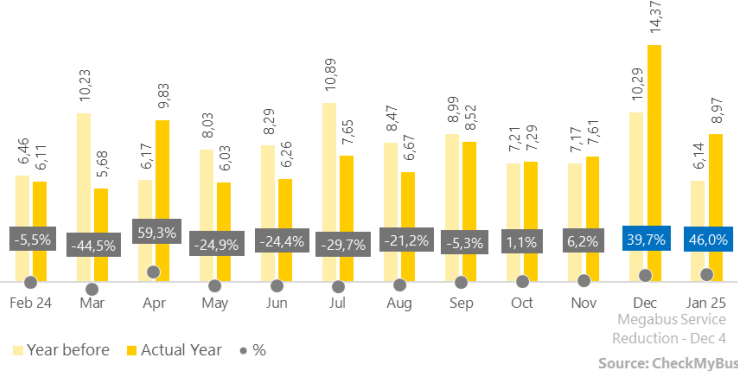
For many, coach travel remains the preferred or most cost-effective way of travelling, and passengers are instead using services run by megabus' competitors such as National Express and FlixBus. However, with choice and competition reduced, concerns have arisen about rising costs of tickets for passengers.

CheckMyBus, which compares prices and schedules for booking coach tickets online, has produced data highlighting an increase in ticket prices on key routes during 2024. Compared to 2023, many ticket prices rose, with some doing so before the megabus service reduction. Following megabus' announcement, a sharp increase was then observed. This suggests that



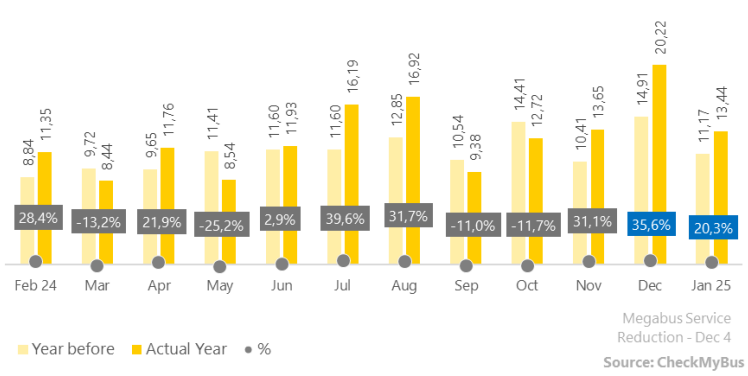
Bus Prices - Birmingham to London

YoY Price Trend - last 12 months (GBP)



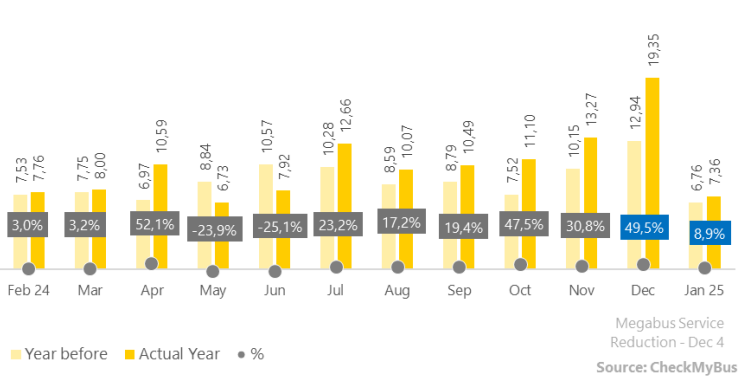
Bus Prices - Manchester to London

YoY Price Trend - last 12 months (GBP)



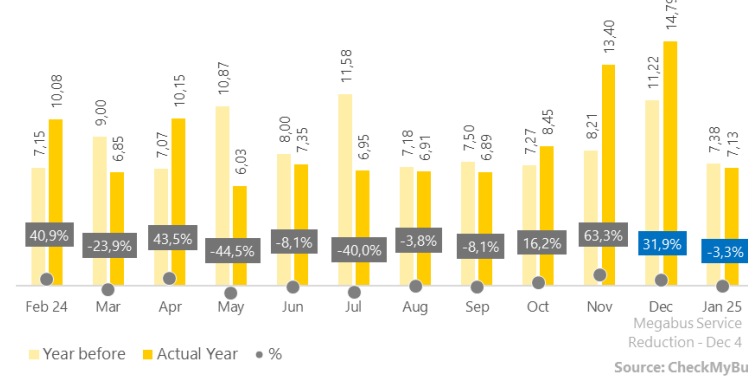
Bus Prices - Cardiff to London

YoY Price Trend - last 12 months (GBP)



Bus Prices - Nottingham to London

YoY Price Trend - last 12 months (GBP)



the service reduction reduced competition and the remaining operators were able to charge more due to passenger demand.

Notably, despite this December increase, CheckMyBus' data observed less of a discrepancy in January, with lasting competition between the remaining players likely helping to stabilise fares.

Marc Hofmann, CEO at CheckMyBus said: "While we have seen temporary noticeable uplifts in December, prices already decreased in January. With National Express and FlixBus, two strong and professional players will keep the market competitive along with local players on specific routes. For this reason, we don't see expect [sic] significant price uplifts in 2025 vs 2024 and the price benefit of bus compared to train will remain strong."

Despite this optimism, megabus' retreat arguably highlights broader challenges facing the UK coach industry, including fluctuating passenger numbers, rising operational costs, and an increased use of car travel.

megabus' decision suggests that demand for long-distance coach services in England and Wales has not recovered as expected following the pandemic, leading to difficult business choices. megabus' retreat could thus foresee a trend where operators streamline services to focus on their most profitable routes.

However, National Express currently continues to operate a widespread network, while FlixBus is rapidly expanding its service offerings, partnering with local operators to connect destinations across the UK.

"This feels like a new golden age for coach travel. Over five million UK passengers have travelled with us since we launched three years ago and they keep coming back. By summer, we'll have over 200 vehicles on the road, more than twice the size of megabus network at their peak."

Andreas Schorling, FlixBus UK MD



© FlixBus

FlixBus commenced its UK operations on 2 July 2020, introducing domestic services connecting London with cities such as Birmingham, Bristol, Guildford and Portsmouth. Since then, the company has experienced significant growth through strategic partnerships and network expansions.

Notably, in November 2024, a **five-year partnership with First Bus** was announced, which will deploy new vehicles on new and expanded routes. Alongside this partnership, FlixBus also announced plans to double its UK network by the end of summer 2025, aiming to operate over 200 vehicles with various partners. In contrast to megabus' withdrawal, this expansion suggests that FlixBus is flourishing in the UK's intercity coach market, operating on a business model that leverages partnerships with local operators.

Andreas Schorling, FlixBus UK MD said: *"This feels like a new golden age for coach travel. Over five million UK passengers have travelled with us since we launched three years ago and they keep coming back. By summer, we'll have over 200 vehicles on the road, more than twice the size of megabus network at their peak."*

2025 is set to be a record-breaking year of growth for FlixBus across the UK. High-profile partners such as First Bus and trentbarton will be coming on board, as well as expansions with existing operator partners. We anticipate extraordinary levels of passenger demand as we bring our affordable, reliable, and sustainable services to more cities than ever before, driving us towards market leadership."

Overall, megabus' withdrawal from much of England and Wales is significant for the UK's coach travel landscape. While the loss of services has reduced options for passengers, competitors like National Express and FlixBus remain present to meet demand. With FlixBus continuing to expand, the intercity coach market remains dynamic, offering hope that affordable and reliable travel will remain accessible for passengers across the UK.

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Seating Development

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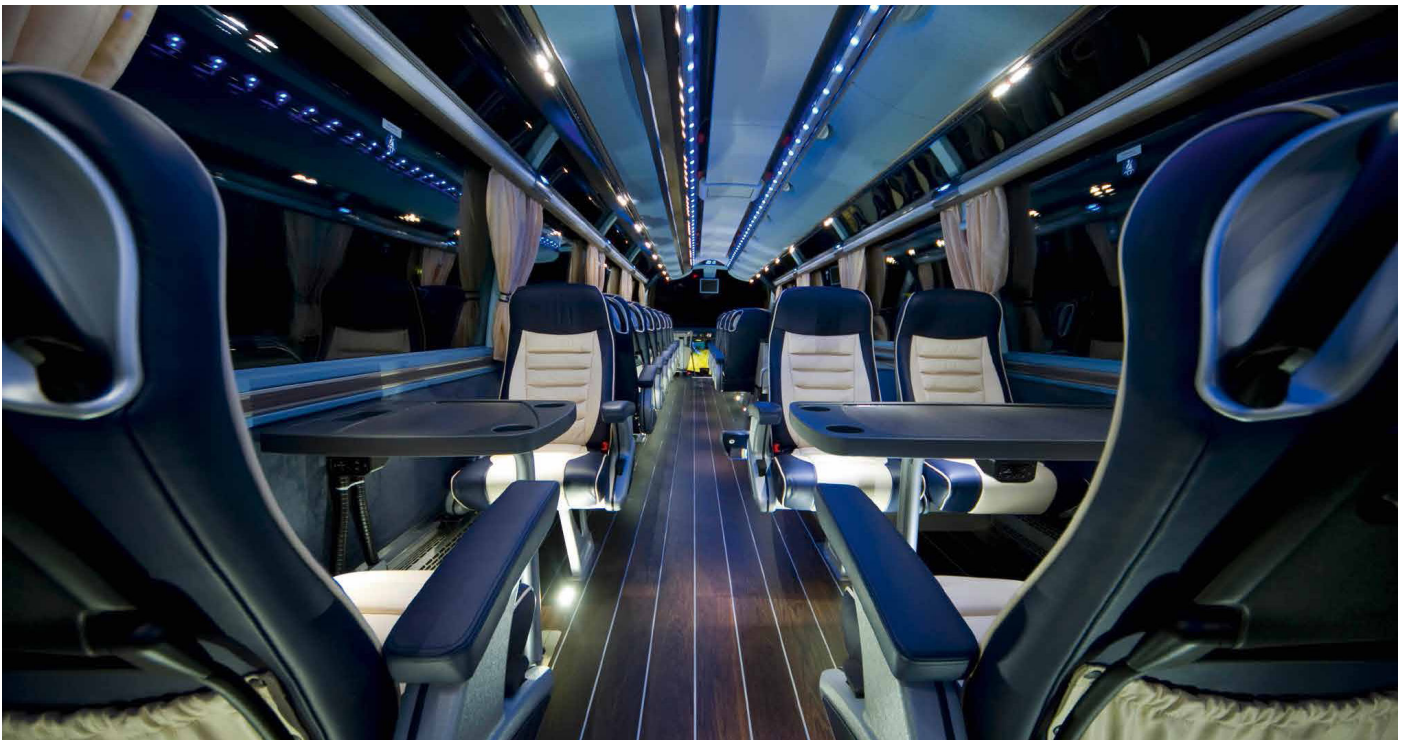


🏠 Directory

Bus Design & Interiors

Kiel Americas

Seating Development



As part of Kiel Group, Kiel Americas has prioritised the comfort and safety of its passengers since 2009.

Kiel Americas offers a wide range of passenger seating systems for local, regional and intercity transport for the cutaway bus market. This includes shuttles for hotels, airports, car rentals, employee travel and even prison buses, as well as commuter, transit, paratransit / on-demand transit and motorcoach applications.

In the best Kiel tradition, all our seats combine quality, individuality, cost-effectiveness and safety with innovative ideas and attractive, lightweight designs. With a commitment to ergonomic design, durability, sustainability and space optimisation, we're not just seating passengers; we're elevating their experience.

Every operation is different, and our customers have many different requirements for their seating. The development of new seating systems at Kiel Americas involves extensive specialist knowledge and many years of experience, along with innovative ideas and a commitment to satisfy customer's requirements whenever possible.

During the start of the development process, Kiel Americas conducts thorough design and ergonomic studies. We begin by designing the new seating concept virtually. Using the CAD programme, Kiel Americas creates an animated image of the product in a realistic environment. This 'digital mock-up' is a crucial component of the entire development process. After the production of a volume or surface model in the software programme, we conduct a finite element method (FEM) analysis. This analysis provides precise



With safety always at the forefront of our designs, Kiel engineers have experience working and conducting crash testing in many different countries. Because they incorporate standards from a variety of safety boards around the world, Kiel passenger seats have achieved high-quality standards.

We take environmental protection into account not only with the weight of our products, but also with their modular construction. Kiel Americas utilises modular, recyclable construction systems, aiming to conserve resources and provide as many environmentally friendly options as possible. Most importantly, a Kiel seat can be renovated after 10 years of use by simply replacing the fabric and foam without the need to scrap the entire seat and purchase a new one.

information about a component's stability before it is constructed, as well as identifying any potential weaknesses. This step is crucial for optimising the weight of the component. Our goal is to minimise weight without compromising quality or safety by using modern materials such as lightweight steel and specialised plastic structures. In the final stage, before going into production, the seat undergoes rigorous testing as a model or prototype such as various stress tests, fire protection tests, crash tests and trial installation.

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SEATING SOLUTIONS



**If you could create
the perfect passenger seating...**

**seating so exquisite
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what would it be?

Tell us.

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