

Go-Ahead tops UK transport industry in cutting carbon emissions

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The Go-Ahead Group has received its highest ever accreditation for its commitment to reducing its carbon emissions. The bus and rail operator received an “A-” grading from international expert group the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project) – the highest score of any UK transport operator.

Since 2016, Go-Ahead has achieved a 22% absolute reduction in group-wide carbon emissions. This is over a period in which the company has grown considerably – including expansion into Germany, Norway, Singapore and Ireland.

A major winter storm, the so-called “beast from the east” that swept across Britain in February 2018, prompted a review of Go-Ahead’s strategy towards climate change as both rail and bus services were significantly disrupted, in a sign of the impact of increasingly common severe weather incidents.

Go-Ahead is already the UK’s largest provider of electric bus services, and the operator of Britain’s first all-electric bus garage in Waterloo, London.

Further measures taken by the group include:

- A commitment to run a zero-emission bus fleet by 2035 – five years ahead of the UK Government’s target
- The introduction of more energy efficient rolling stock – Govia Thameslink Railway improved the efficiency of its electric fleet by 22.6% between 2016/17 and 2019/20
- The launch of the first ever fleet of electric buses to operate in the north-east of England, providing 55,000 journeys a year to two million passengers
- Installation of solar panels at three UK bus depots, four UK rail depots and one German rail depot
- Trials of air filtering buses and regenerative braking

Go-Ahead is committed to clean energy solutions. All the Group’s UK premises – including rail stations and bus depots – are powered by zero carbon electricity generated from fully renewable sources, such as solar, wind and hydro power. The amount of electricity that was generated through solar power increased by 490% from the financial year 2017/18 to 2018/19.

The group has introduced incentives for employees to contribute towards carbon reduction – including energy reduction targets for railway station managers, cash bonuses for bus drivers who conserve fuel as measured by a telematics system, and a prize of an electric car at Go-Ahead London for the employee with the best energy saving idea.

Go-Ahead London’s newly built electric bus garage, Northumberland Park, is the biggest overnight charging electric bus garage in Europe and will become a ‘virtual power station’ by feeding back energy into the National Grid. Go-Ahead is also in talks regarding what has the potential to be Europe’s biggest ever order of hydrogen buses for operation in Crawley and Gatwick.

Go-Ahead’s Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer Katy Taylor said: “Public transport is part of the solution in addressing climate change and poor air quality. Trains and buses provide an environmentally responsible mode of travel, and we’re cutting emissions every year through investment in the very latest technology.

“The ‘Beast from the East’ was a wake-up call to much of Britain on the impact of climate change. We’re delighted that the CDP’s ranking reflects our commitment to contribute to a cleaner, greener world. As a responsible business we will continue to investigate solutions for cutting our carbon footprint even further.”

Photo credit: Go-Ahead – Go North East electric bus in Newcastle