

Stagecoach carries out first trials of new bridge alert technology

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Industry-leading new bridge alert technology has been successfully trialled by Stagecoach on its buses in Cambridge, one of Europe's leading technology hubs. The new technology will now be installed on around 4,000 double decker buses and high coaches across England, Scotland and Wales as part of a £4million investment.

Stagecoach is the first bus operator in the country to invest in the national roll-out of this new technology, which will strengthen existing safety measures in place to prevent bridge strikes and build on its industry-leading use of the GreenRoad driver safety and fuel efficiency system.

The intelligent GreenRoad system uses GPS vehicle location data and mapping services to alert bus drivers to nearby low bridges. If the technology determines that the bus is heading towards a low bridge, it will sound an in-cab alert, allowing a safe exit route that avoids the bridge.

Training and briefing is now getting underway for Stagecoach's engineers and drivers to help them install and use the new software. Around 18,000 low bridges across the UK are being mapped into the new system in advance of the full roll-out of the technology planned by late summer 2021.

Data published by Network Rail shows that there were 1714 railway bridge strikes across the country in the 2019-20 financial year. Most of these incidents involve heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), with between 40 and 50 a year related to buses.

The new technology will enhance the range of existing safety measures in place, including the design of bus routes to avoid low bridges, detailed classroom and practical route training for drivers, and ongoing work with authorities to ensure the placement of appropriate signage and other alerts.

Sam Greer, Engineering Director for Stagecoach, said: "Stagecoach has a strong track record of delivering innovation. Our major investment in this cutting-edge new technology is a clear demonstration of us going one step further to deliver an industry-leading initiative to further enhance the safety systems we have in place.

"We are very pleased with the successful trial in Cambridge, which has been welcomed by the Senior Traffic Commissioner in the East of England, and we will now move ahead with the full roll out across all of our double-decker buses and high coaches."

Richard Hemming, GreenRoad's Vice President of Customer Success, said: "We are very pleased to work with Stagecoach, our long-term partners, to develop this important new safety technology for the benefit of its passengers and all those who use UK roads. As a company fully focused on safety, we pledge to continue bringing the market new innovations that solve safety challenges and encourage safe, environmentally responsible driving habits."

Stagecoach is continuing to make major investment in new technology to help improve the service it offers customers. Earlier this year, it announced investment in new technology to help plan the bus networks of the future to match the changes in how people travel coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. New digital systems have also been introduced to manage the maintenance of its bus fleet, which is helping to provide greater availability and boost reliability, and it has delivered Britain's biggest transit contactless programme.

Photo and video credit: Stagecoach