

Connecting Communities

Go East Anglia
Sustainability Report 2020



goeastanglia



Go East Anglia operates bus services across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex, trading as Hedingham, Chambers, Konectbus and Norwich Park and Ride.

We provide a bus network of routes across towns and villages throughout East Anglia with larger hubs in East Dereham, Norwich, Clacton-on-Sea and Colchester.

We carry over five million passengers per year on 159 local bus routes which includes bespoke school contract operations.

We currently employ more than 350 people and are actively recruiting applicants from the local community with our range of employment and training opportunities.



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Find out more...

Twitter:

@konectbuses
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Facebook:

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@hedinghambuses
@chambersbus

Website:

konectbus.co.uk
norwichparkandride.co.uk
chambersbus.co.uk
hedingham.co.uk

Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our buses in a way which helps to put our services at the heart of the communities they serve.

This report is split into six sections:

Finance

To operate our business and services in an open and transparent way

→ Read more on page 04

Happier customers

To provide a safe, reliable service to our customers

→ Read more on page 06

Better teams

To constantly develop our people

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Stronger communities

To increase positive and proactive engagement with the communities we serve

→ Read more on page 09

Cleaner environment

To look at the way in which we can reduce our impact on the environment

→ Read more on page 12

Safer working

To provide safe working environments for our people and our customers

→ Read more on page 13

Managing Director's Message



2020 highlights

- Adapting to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic across our businesses
- Three brand new buses for Norwich Park and Ride
- Improved services between Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds and Colchester
- Celebrating 60 years of Hedingham Omnibuses
- Extended operating hours of Norwich Park and Ride
- Acquisition of seven double decker buses to support social distancing across our network

“I pay tribute to everyone in the Go East Anglia team for their hard work over the past 12 months, especially during some potentially dangerous and worrying times. It has been a matter of immense pride for me to have worked with such dedicated people.”

Jeremy Cooper
Managing Director

The single biggest event for everyone in 2020 has, of course, been the Coronavirus pandemic. Coping with the consequences has been an enormous team effort, with public transport remaining in the front line of public consciousness.

For us, there were two key phases of the pandemic. The first was the lockdown where we shrank our operation, put many people on furlough, and yet continued to provide the required services for key workers, for which there were many willing volunteers. The second phase has seen a gradual reintroduction of the full network (with a few exceptions such as the Postwick Park and Ride operation, which remains closed to facilitate a coronavirus testing station).

Reintroduction of the full network has been facilitated by the government COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant, which largely covered the shortfall in customer revenue.



I must pay tribute to everyone in the Go East Anglia team. Those in the front line, driving and cleaning buses at potentially dangerous and worrying times, deserve the particular thanks of all the community. We should not however forget the engineering teams in the workshops, the supervisory and management teams, and those who have replanned the scheduling and financial arrangements repeatedly, as instructions and guidance have changed. It has been a matter of immense pride for me to have worked with such dedicated people.

Back in January, prior to the advent of COVID-19, we were pleased to take on the main route from Clacton to Walton when the existing operator relinquished the operation, along with their competing route to Colchester. This has given us a comprehensive network in Clacton - a fitting way to crown the 60th anniversary of Hedingham Omnibuses. The network has now been reviewed to better focus resources on the busier routes, where we believe there is scope for passenger growth, given the improved frequencies we can now achieve without additional cost.

A similar review has been undertaken at our Sudbury operation where we have improved the service between Sudbury and Colchester/ Bury St Edmunds, though sadly at the expense of some of the intermediate villages where use was very infrequent. Rural West Suffolk continues to be a challenging environment for local bus operation.

Essex County Council contracts still form the base of much of our work in Essex and we continue to deliver large volume home to school transport solutions where we offer a reliable, value for money service to the local authority at a sustainable profit margin.

We made several improvements to our range of services in Norfolk during July 2019, including extended operating hours on the Norwich Park and Ride. Unfortunately, few of these were successful and a reassessment of the scope of the business has taken place, with a reduction

in scale to what we hope will prove to be a profitable core focused more on Dereham. We were able to retain a significant package of tendered work in the Dereham area, but the market for tenders remains very tough.

Continuing to provide good bus services in the rural East Anglian communities that we serve remains challenging. The opportunities for commercial revenue growth, where town and city centres see footfall decline, remain limited.

Despite this, we continue to invest in our equipment and our people, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what we do. Besides the continued success of our training school in training new bus drivers, we took the opportunity to offer extra driver training to all our drivers during the early part of the COVID-19 pandemic and have continued to invest in the training of our engineering apprentices. Established members of the team – managers, supervisors, skilled engineers and the finance team – have all received development training, and during the year, we had three graduate trainees working with us.

We are confident that we can continue to deliver effective and efficient bus operations. However, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on long term demand remains to be seen and it is difficult at this point to estimate the outcome. The crucial role of bus services in tackling access to education and employment, as well as social exclusion, seems to be better understood.



Finance

Go East Anglia makes a direct, positive contribution to the economy by providing a safe, efficient and convenient service to our customers, with a total of 5m journeys undertaken annually.

Facing challenges

The recovery plan which was implemented in 2018 and continued throughout 2019, was reviewed and although significant progress had been made in restoring the company to profit, further action was required to sustain this progress. As a result, a small number of routes were identified which did not contribute towards our overhead base and these were either withdrawn or retendered. As part of our on going strategic goal, we have entered redundancy consultation with some of our staff and are reviewing our working practices in order to minimise any potential job losses.

We have invested in three brand new buses for our Norwich operation and continue to review investment opportunities to improve our fleet.

We work actively with local councils to ensure that we offer value for money transport, whilst still receiving a sustainable contract price that allows us to deliver a reliable service.

Go East Anglia continues to make a positive contribution to the local economy. We provide jobs to local people, offer a safe passenger service to our customers, and support local businesses, charities and the community by supporting special events.



Key highlights

5m

passenger journeys

350

employees based across nine sites

148

buses in our fleet



Three brand new Euro VI buses joined the Norwich Operations

Coronavirus crisis

The challenges of coronavirus have been met robustly by the management team. Colleagues have been supported throughout the crisis, with management ensuring safe working practices have been introduced, PPE and hand sanitiser purchased, and increased cleaning regimes for both buses and offices were implemented.

The company has ensured that it has applied for the appropriate government funding through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant, to ensure that its financial commitments have been met, and commitments were received from local authorities to continue to pay contracted income in order to ensure that the impact on our services were as low as possible.

During this time, we have worked actively with the local transport authorities to ensure that services that were required, were run to ensure key workers and vulnerable children were able to travel. Thanks to our actions, we have not yet had to make any compulsory redundancies as a direct result of the crisis.



Many of our drivers put themselves on the frontline to transport key workers across our network

Plan your journey

- Please take a **hand sanitiser** and **use a face covering** to protect others



- **Do not travel** if you feel unwell



Hedingham buses remind passengers about the importance of wearing a face covering on public transport

Happier customers

Our customers need up to date, accurate and well presented information. They want to be greeted by a friendly driver and ride on a clean, smart bus. They want a network of services that goes where they need to, at a price they can afford.

Customer Satisfaction

The Customer Satisfaction Transport Focus Survey in March 2020 reflected a steady increase in positive customer experiences across all areas of the Hedingham and Chambers businesses, leading to an overall result of 87% customer satisfaction. Our driving team played an instrumental role in this success, achieving 89% in overall satisfaction.

Updating the Community

During the pandemic, customers have relied upon receiving the most up to date safety and travel information, so that they can plan their journeys in advance and feel confident travelling on our buses. We regularly communicated our safety measures and timetable plans to provide safe and more efficient journeys during lockdown, especially to support key workers and passengers requiring access to essential services. This included safety posters displayed on buses, virtual bus tours to demonstrate safety measures before the commencement of the new school term, regular updates via Twitter and Facebook posts and additional safety messages on next stop announcements.

We also created a dedicated Coronavirus page on our website to ensure all the most up to date information was quickly accessible. This comprised detailed safety information and guidelines, as well as timetable changes which were monitored and reviewed based on customer feedback.



Helping Hand card have helped passengers when travelling on our buses



One of the safety measure posters on display on our buses to reassure our passengers

Customer Feedback

Running at approximately 45% of normal service following government advice, it was important for Go East Anglia to react quickly to the needs of key workers to ensure vital services could be maintained and that children of key workers could attend school.

Konectbus reintroduced some journey extensions between Toftwood and Watton via Shipdham to make both Norwich and Watton more accessible for care workers in the early mornings and evenings, and a later evening journey on Hedingham route 3 allowed factory workers in Harwich a convenient journey back to Clacton after their shift.

During the pandemic, we have received the following feedback :

“Thank you for the continued service provided by the few drivers who continued to work during this uncertain time. They have provided a sterling service for us members of the public that had no other form of transport.”

“I appreciate that in the current circumstances bus drivers have an even more difficult job than normal, so thanks to Konectbus for continuing to provide an excellent service in such challenging conditions”



Children from the local community provided these colourful rainbows for us to display on our buses



Better teams

At Go East Anglia, we recognise the benefits of employing a diverse workforce and invest in our employees.

Learning and Development

Through our two established training schools we successfully trained 35 new PCV licence holders, all of whom have been employed to drive our buses.

We have provided training for our driver mentors, supervisors and the management team in order to strengthen our skill base and become more efficient and effective in our day to day roles.

All our driving staff have attended the driving school to receive training on coronavirus safe practices for passenger transport and given an annual driving assessment to ensure that our standards have been maintained. Our engineering team includes four apprentices at various different stages of their training, all of whom play an active part in maintaining the fleet.

This year, we have recruited two graduates to help strengthen the management team and help to support our front line staff.

Diverse workforce

Go East Anglia is committed to being inclusive and employing a diverse workforce.

By actively promoting the bus industry as female-friendly, we have increased our female representation among our colleagues to 14% and consider that we are well on the way to meeting our commitment to achieve a 20% female driver ratio by 2025.



Key highlights

35

new PCV drivers trained

14%

female driver ratio

48

in-house CPC training completed

4

apprenticeship programmes running at Go East Anglia



Newly appointed drivers at the Go East Anglia Driving School

Stronger Communities

Go East Anglia contributes to the local economy by supporting other businesses and communities with initiatives and events.

Community initiatives

During the year, we launched several initiatives to connect and support local communities. Before lockdown, Konectbus collaborated with the Norwich Together Alliance, founded by Aviva, to launch 'Chatty Bus', a scheme designed to help combat social isolation. The concept was presented by members of the Konectbus team at the 'Open Up at Open' event organised by the East Anglia Press, which focussed on issues surrounding mental health in the community.

In March, volunteers from many partners of the alliance and Konectbus employees travelled on routes 5A, 5B and 5C across Norwich in order to reach out to members of the community who might be suffering from loneliness. Although there was another event planned for May in both Clacton-on-Sea and Norwich, lockdown prevented it from going ahead but made the need to connect isolated and elderly people even more evident. With this in mind, 'Virtual Chatty Bus' was launched in conjunction with Age UK, for which employees from Konectbus, Hedingham and Chambers joined forces to call local residents to chat, share stories and provide a lifeline to those whom lockdown affected most. Konectbus became one of the founding members of the Norwich Together Alliance, establishing key relationships with numerous businesses and charities across Norwich through the shared objective of tackling loneliness across the county.



When a football club, local council, therapy dog, care home, insurance company and a bus company came together, our Chatty Bus film was born



Volunteers from Age UK and Aviva joined Konectbus on board the Chatty Bus to help tackle loneliness through the power of conversation

Stronger Communities continued



Pudsey Bear took the driver's wheel at Norwich Park and Ride for Children in Need

Building Business Relationships

Konectbus has also supported Norwich BID this year, notably at its Love Light Festival in February 2020, for which we installed our own heart lights on our buses to publicise the event. Additionally, Hedingham is working with Colchester BID in order to identify ways of aiding the community and promoting local businesses. We are also collaborating with Visit Essex to promote the Clacton Breeze open top bus and the diverse activities that can be enjoyed whilst holidaying in the county.

With regards local charities, Konectbus has supported Norwich Street Aid, an organisation in support of the homeless, by hosting a contactless donation machine at Norwich Bus Station. We are also proud supporters of Norwich Pride and pledge to ensure that our buses will be a safe, welcoming and friendly place for LGBT+ customers and staff to travel on.





Drivers from Konectbus delivered provisions to businesses in Watton following the outbreak of a fire on the High street

Community Involvement

Seasonal events are always a great opportunity to get involved with the community, and last year, Hedingham brought a sense of fun to the daily commute with drivers donning fancy dress for Halloween and Christmas. Konectbus ran a Nor-WITCH event on route 8 over the Halloween week, encouraging customer engagement with a chance to win a hamper by taking selfies whilst travelling on the route and posting them to social media. We ran a similar campaign at Christmas with a 'Spot the Reindeer' competition on Norwich Park and Ride routes, aimed at engaging children with bus travel. This comprised an activity sheet on which children could tick off each of the reindeer as they spotted them on buses around the city and then claim their prize at Norwich Bus Station once they had found them all. A 'Spot the Elf' social media campaign was launched at the same time on route 8 in order to publicise these routes as an enjoyable travel option during the busy Christmas period.

Supporting needs

We are always looking to support local development, so this year we welcomed a student from Clacton Coastal Academy for work experience in customer services and ticket sales in order to gain experience of how the business works and the importance of customer relations in a practical setting. Equally, in the north of the business, following a fire in Watton High Street which destroyed several local businesses, Konectbus collected provisions at the depot and delivered them to the local donation point as a goodwill gesture in challenging times.

As we are all aware, this year has presented numerous health, social, and economic challenges for many residents and workers across all communities. With this in mind, during lockdown, Konectbus, Hedingham and Chambers were proud to demonstrate support for all the hardworking NHS staff by participating in the weekly Thursday evening 'Clap for the NHS', beeping horns and flashing lights whilst displaying dedicated NHS destination screens, to show how much we value the crucial work they do and their heightened commitment and bravery during the pandemic.

Many NHS staff and other key workers were also parents or guardians whose children still needed to use our buses to attend school. To support them and their families, we continued to run our dedicated school services across all our networks.

Cleaner environment

At Go East Anglia, we are always looking at ways to reduce our impact on the environment. More energy efficient buses help reduce pollution whilst cleaner workplaces keep everyone healthy and safe. Clean buses are important for the comfort of our passengers and this has never been more important than during the recent pandemic.

Newer, cleaner, more reliable buses

We are committed to operating our businesses in an increasingly sustainable manner and seek to reduce our environmental impact year on year.

The COVID-19 crisis has increased our understanding of the connection between the environment and social impact, with communities placing a much greater value on health and wellbeing than ever before. Go East Anglia strives to deliver efficient services that encourage people out of their cars and onto the bus. This is especially true in urban centres such as Norwich and Colchester where traffic congestion has a large impact on air pollution.



There is evidence which suggests that COVID-19 is more prevalent in areas with higher levels of air pollution. During lockdown, it was reported that air quality dramatically improved in city centres in just a short space of time, as fewer people used their cars.

Norwich Park and Ride introduced three brand new Enviro 200 MMC buses in November. As well as boasting the latest technological features, the buses also featured stop start technology, to reduce emissions when stationary. These buses ran through an area in Norwich where air pollution has been identified as an issue and support the Norwich Low Emissions Zone.



Safer Working

During the height of the pandemic, Go East Anglia recognised its role as a vital transport link for key workers, especially those travelling to and from hospitals, and the safety of both its staff and passengers during this time became more important than ever.

Safety on Board

Go East Anglia has high standards of cleanliness on its buses. They are all cleaned daily and since the onset of the pandemic, the buses were subject to an even more thorough cleaning regime. To achieve this, we utilised drivers and engineering staff who would otherwise have been furloughed.

Every day, our buses received a routine sweep and tidy and all touch points are cleaned daily with a virus killing agent to reduce the risk of any virus transmission.

Technological development

2020 has seen a significant level of investment in technological development across the business, helping us meet the challenging demands brought about by COVID-19 and providing our customers and staff with an enhanced level of service and support.

In response to the pandemic, we introduced a passenger counting tool on our ticketer machines. This allowed us to monitor and assess our passenger numbers throughout lockdown as key workers continued to travel. It also ensured that once the restrictions were relaxed, we continued to retain, in-line with the with the government guidance, social distancing measures across our fleet as passenger numbers began to grow. Ticket machines were also changed to be able to accept payments of up to £45, rather than £30, and this made it easier for our customers to purchase a range of tickets on the bus card and therefore, further reduce contact.



Key highlights

60%

of all payments currently made are contactless

87%

of our employees actively use Blink

3.5/5

app rating awarded by our customers on Apple I-store



Our Busy Bus (when2 travel) website was launched to help with social distancing and support passengers travelling during the pandemic

Safer Working continued

Journey Planning

As more people began to return to work and our network grew, we launched our 'Busy Bus' tracking tool. Developed by City Swift, the 'When2travel' (Busy Bus) website enabled our customers to plan their journey in advance, using a traffic-light indicator tool to show whether their bus was full or near capacity prior to leaving home.

Across our Park and Ride fleet, we have made use of our next stop announcement and digital screens to play and display pre-recorded safety messages as the passenger's board and travel on our buses.

Employee engagement

The arrival of BLINK, our internal communications app, in January, opened a new online way to communicate with employees across the business. The portal quickly became a valuable asset following the outbreak of COVID-19 and has ensured communications have remained accessible to all, especially those who were on furlough or working from home.

Blink has been well received and has enabled drivers to access their duties and rotas online as well as providing other employees, especially the management team, with another way to share important messages, business changes, network, as well as publicity materials and local press coverage.

2018 saw the arrival of our East Anglia Buses App and in 2020, we launched Version 2. Based upon the feedback gained from focus groups and customer research, the new app delivered more enhanced features for our customers, including fare zone maps and a more effective journey planner. Interlinking with the Bus Open Data Service, the streamlined app is easier to navigate and tickets can be bought online.



Driver, Chris Mylum, was the first employee to sign up at the launch of Blink

Key data: Go East Anglia

	2020	2019
Safer working		
Bus accidents per million miles	79	69
Fleet with CCTV (%)+	100	100
Bus fleet which is DDA/PSVAR compliant (%)	98	97.4
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	0	0
Number of reported crimes+	0	2
Happier customers		
Customer Satisfaction (%)	87	n/a
Punctuality (%)	71.4	86.5
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (%)	98	97.4
Better teams		
Number of employees	363	372
Average length of service in years/months	4.8	5.8
Employee turnover rate (%)	29.2	37.9
Absenteeism rate (%)	2.6	1.6
Female employees (%)	14	13
Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) employees (%)	0.8	1.6
Average training spend per employee (£)	174	204
Number of staff training days	616	281
Total spent on training (£)	63,677	75,882
Stronger communities		
Community investment per employee (£)	1.43	n/a
Cleaner environment		
Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (kg)	1.39	1.49

Key

+ For the reporting period
 RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations at workplaces
 DDA – Disability Discrimination Act



For information on the full Group data, please visit our corporate website: go-ahead.com

More information

You can find out more about Go East Anglia on our company websites:

www.konectbus.co.uk

www.norwichparkandride.co.uk

www.chambersbus.co.uk

www.hedingham.co.uk

If you have any comments, views or ideas on how we might improve, or have any thoughts on other issues that we should address in this report, please write to:

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Photography by Konectbus Ltd and Chris Dugdell

Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Ltd (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group's Annual Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 30 June 2019 to 27 June 2020.

The full verification statement including Bureau Veritas' verification opinion, methodology, recommendations and a statement of independence and impartiality can be found on the Go-Ahead Group website:

www.go-ahead.com

