

ADEPT President's Awards 2024

Entry form

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Award category Delivering Clean Growth

Project Title Norwich Electric

Local authority entrant Norfolk County Council

Partner/s if applicable First Bus

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

Norwich Electric has created an all-electric bus depot fit for the future, home to 70 new, state-of-the-art, fully electric, zero emission buses.

Please note we need at least one supporting image per award submission. Upload your image/s below.



Delivering clean growth: How is this project delivering clean growth, not just now but into the future – demonstrating ambition and vision, anticipating future challenges and future proofing growth including developing the workforce for the future? (150 words max)

The delivery of Norwich Electric presented an opportunity to invest in transport at a critical time for facilitating growth and increasing productivity, whilst at the same time tackling congestion, carbon emissions and poor air quality, giving us a head-start in understanding the challenges of introducing zero emission buses to inform future government support for future investment. We have enabled local upskilling of existing workforces to happen earlier and at a faster rate, in particular the engineering and driver teams, resulting in the bus sector being a more attractive proposition to future workforces, more closely aligned with the career aspirations of younger people at a time of well-publicised driver and engineer shortages. Full electrification of the Roundtree Way depot and removal of all diesel infrastructure and related engineering equipment demonstrates a permanent and complete commitment to ZEBs, serving as an example to other large fleet operators in the region and UK.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project working across boundaries and with different partners to achieve long lasting clean growth? (150 words max)

Norfolk benefits from a bus network that has developed thanks to close, regular and overwhelmingly positive collaboration and partnership working between the County Council and bus operators so that we are in an ideal position to respond to new opportunities and funding opportunities as they arise. Delivery of Norwich Electric has been through the Transport for Norwich programme, which is a partnership led by the County Council with partner local authorities Norwich City, Broadland District and South Norfolk Councils. Benefits span across administrative boundaries and complement the delivery of other infrastructure schemes providing priority to public transport on the highway network, as well as behaviour-change programmes aimed at encouraging greater use of public transport and active modes, supporting long-lasting clean growth. The successful delivery of Norwich Electric acts as springboard for more zero emission buses to be introduced in Norfolk through the Norfolk Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project proactively engaging with business to tackle problems and find solutions, stimulating the clean growth sector at the same time? (150 words max.)

The full electrification of the First Bus depot provides opportunities for local businesses who have considered upgrading their fleet to battery electric vehicles but found the infrastructure lacking or the costs prohibitive. The rapid bus chargers are interoperable with the majority of EV manufactured vehicles and while First Bus would always have priority regarding the use of charging infrastructure at their depot and would charge the buses overnight, the charging equipment could be made available during the daytime. Options for enabling other business users who have the potential to transition to electric vehicles to utilise this infrastructure and benefit the wider business community, without having to invest in specialist equipment and electrical grid upgrade works, are being actively explored.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project going beyond the 3-5 year budget cycle to prepare for future challenges including the use or consideration of innovative funding solutions? (150 words max.)

The delivery of Norwich Electric is considered viable in the long term as whole life (operating and maintenance) costs are lower than those from diesel buses, and there are further operational efficiencies by not running a mixed diesel / electric fleet from the depot. Power to the depot is 100% renewable power and 146 solar panels have been installed on the roof generating around 40% of the building's electrical requirements. Allied with other operational energy efficiency upgrades at site to reduce energy consumption, these elements will enable future reinvestment in bus services and purchase of further electric buses beyond the next 3-5 years. An innovative approach saw funding secured from OFGEM through the Green Recovery Fund to reinforce the electrical distribution network in Norwich near to the First Bus depot, resulting in Distribution Network Operator (DNO) connection costs being significantly lower than would have been the case otherwise.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

A single Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) covers large areas of Norwich city centre and Castle Meadow, within the AQMA, acts as a transport hub and is the most heavily-used street for bus movements in the city. All of the new zero emission buses serve Castle Meadow and run through the AQMA, replacing diesel buses, and saving at least 75 tonnes of CO2 per bus per annum. The bus routes benefitting from the 70 new zero emission buses operate through areas of high multiple deprivation and link these areas with appropriate employment, training and education at edge of city industrial estates, business parks and the city centre itself. Norwich Electric has been delivered to time and budget and represents a great example of the public and private sector working together.