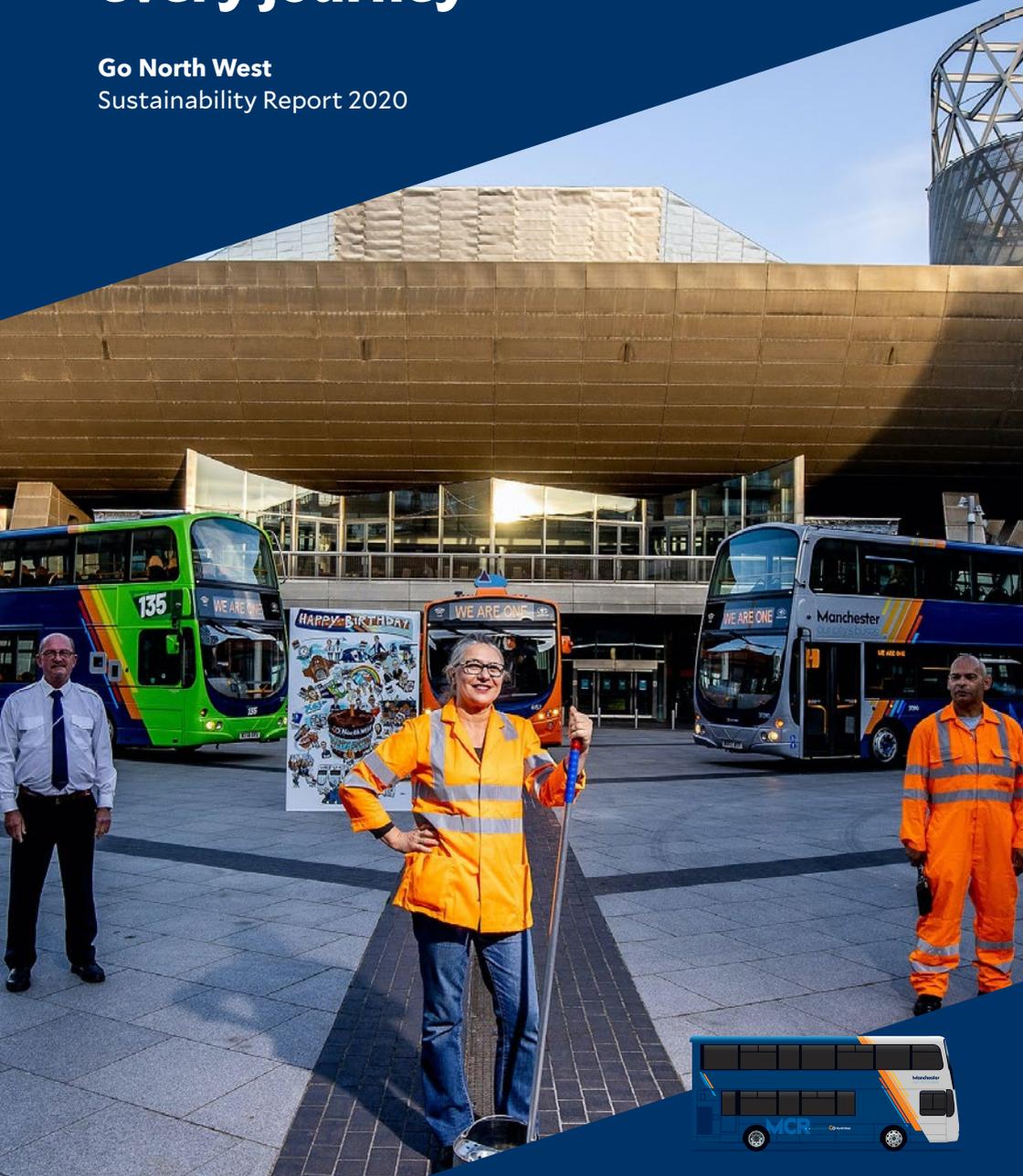


Taking care of every journey

Go North West
Sustainability Report 2020



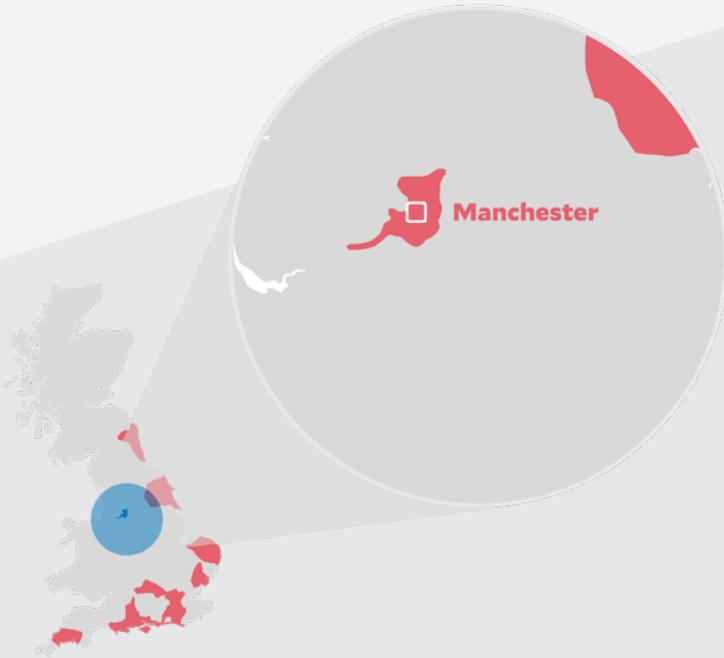
local bus services from  North West

Go North West is an integral part of the Greater Manchester economy.

The business was founded in 2019 when it took ownership of the bus operations based at Queens Road bus depot. Our bus services connect some of the region's most populated areas with the heart of the city, with routes across Manchester and Salford, to places including Bury, Rochdale and the Trafford Centre.

The network carries over 15 million journeys per year underlining the importance of buses to the people who live, visit, and do business in the city. The operation sustains 650 jobs and generates £28m of turnover.

Go North West is a subsidiary of the Go-Ahead Group plc, one of the UK's largest transport providers.



In this report

- 02 Managing Director's message
- 04 Finance
- 06 Safer working
- 07 Stronger communities
- 08 Happier customers
- 10 Better teams
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- 13 Key data

Find out more...

Twitter:

@gnwbus

Facebook:

Go North West

Instagram:

@gnwbus

Website:

gonorthwest.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](#)

Safer working

To provide safe working environments for our people and our customers

→ [Read more on page 06](#)

Stronger communities

To increase positive and proactive engagement with the communities we serve

→ [Read more on page 07](#)

Happier customers

To provide a safe, reliable service to our customers

→ [Read more on page 08](#)

Better teams

To constantly develop our people

→ [Read more on page 10](#)

Cleaner environment

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

→ [Read more on page 12](#)

Managing Director's message



2020 highlights

- £25.1m revenue
- 15 million customer journeys across Greater Manchester
- Simplification of our adult fares and tickets
- 3 new brands – MCR, Orbits and Manchester's 135
- Launch of Business Travel Club, our new discount scheme
- 5% network mileage expansion
- 6% passenger growth (pre-COVID-19)
- £1m investment in staff training

“Welcome to our Sustainability Report for 2020. Key highlights in the year have included a raft of celebrations for our first birthday, welcoming a fleet of new buses for our Orbits 52 and 53 services, and introducing a bright new brand for the 135.”

Nigel Featham
Managing Director

It's just over one year since Go North West took over at Queens Road depot and, from a personal point of view, it has been tremendously satisfying to see the progress made over that period.

Acquisitions can be a scary experience for the people who really matter – the employees who turn up one morning to find a new sign over the door, a new boss, a new direction and a new way of thinking. Our aim wasn't simply 'business as usual' when we acquired the depot – we believed we could do better as an operation, an employer, and as a serious contender in the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) public transport arena.

When Go-Ahead acquired Queens Road in June 2019, we weren't merely buying a set of buses, some bricks and mortar and a handful of TUPE transfers. We were investing in an opportunity; entering into a new and vibrant marketplace in Greater Manchester, with the standing start of an established base and a proven team.

As one of the UK's leading public transport providers, we have sought to build our business on some key principles, not least looking after our people and aiming for the

highest possible satisfaction ratings from our passengers. Of course, those goals are inextricably linked.

In a remarkably short period of time, and up against the clock, our team in those early days led by David Cutts, installed a raft of new IT systems, onboarded over 600 colleagues, created a whole new brand, and began to establish new relationships with local partners and industry bodies, including TfGM. Their fantastic effort, together with the co-operation of the previous owners, FirstGroup, ensured the transition was as smooth and seamless as possible, and I remain grateful to the transition team for the strong foundations they laid in the first few months of operations.

But life has a habit of throwing up the unexpected, and just as we were getting into our stride, we had a new challenge to meet in the form of the COVID-19 coronavirus crisis. One-fifth of our first year at Queens Road has been adversely affected by a pandemic nobody could have predicted. It has caused turmoil for us as a business, but we are mindful that it has

impacted on each and every one of our colleagues' and passengers' lives.

Though unimaginable just a few short months ago, the crisis has not daunted nor stopped us from carrying on with our mission. In January, shortly before COVID-19 hit, we launched our very first route brand, Orbits, for routes 52 and 53, which loop the city, connecting many of Manchester's most densely packed suburbs, serving hospitals, schools and places of work.

Later in the year, we relaunched the 135, one of Manchester's most important bus routes and we celebrated adding the first new tendered routes to our network, the 96 and 415, which took us into Oldham for the very first time.

The world appeared to have turned upside down, and we are a long way from being through it. But we've learned through this challenging year that we are a tough, adaptable team, and, more than ever, we know that what we do really counts – for our passengers, for each and every member of our workforce, for our livelihoods and for our families.



We celebrated our first birthday in June 2020

Finances

Go North West provide services that connect the heart of Manchester with some of its busiest suburbs. The network covers over 7 million miles per annum and carries over 15 million journeys.

During our first year of operation (pre-COVID-19), we significantly improved the reliability of the routes we inherited, modernised the bus fleet and increased the number of departures on key corridors. We supported this with customer led marketing activity including promoting digital information and contactless payment. We also simplified the fare structure and froze or reduced a number of key fares. This strategy yielded passenger growth of over 6%.

A steady stream of tender wins has added to the network.

COVID-19, and the associated lockdown measures, had a huge and unparalleled impact on public transport. From March 2020, services were scaled back to about 40% of normal levels, until being restored to pre-COVID levels in September. Patronage fell to as low as 20% of normal levels and, by September, had reached 60% of normal levels. The key role of the bus operation in lockdown was to ensure services remained in operation to transport key workers.

Fares simplification

In January 2020, we overhauled and simplified our range of tickets, with ticket prices decreasing for many customers and also introduced of a new evening ticket priced at just £4 to tempt people away from taxis.



Key highlights

£25.1m

revenue across Go North West

15m

customer journeys

7m

miles operated

650

number of employees across Go North West

Partnerships

We launched partnerships with the University of Salford and Manchester Metropolitan University, which now sees these institutions selling Go North West tickets to students through their Student Unions.

Business Travel Club

We launched our Business Travel Club, a scheme offering discounted tickets to employees at large companies across the city when they join our scheme. This has boosted our revenue, with increased sales of annual and 28 Day tickets through the scheme.

Over the year, the use of our app and contactless payments on our buses have continued to grow at a substantial rate.

Contactless

From June 2019 onwards, we have invested £1.7m in ticket machines that accept contactless payments, with great success. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have urged customers to switch to contactless. 56% of our on-bus transactions are now made by contactless payment as opposed to cash. This is up from an average of 32% of transactions before the pandemic.

App

The app helps customers plan journeys, see live bus times and buy mobile tickets for their journey.

Its popularity has increased since we launched V2 featuring live tracking in January 2020.

By the end of the financial year, there had been 23,600 downloads, and the app now accounts for 5.8% of all ticket revenue.



Key highlights

56%

on-bus contactless transactions

23,600

app downloads

5.8%

of all ticket revenue comes from the app



Safer working

Even before the pandemic one of our key focuses for our first year of operation was safety. We have implemented the '5S' safety protocols in engineering, and our operations are now certified COVID-secure by Visit Britain.

On board our buses

To ensure COVID security on board our buses, we have implemented new and enhanced cleaning protocols, with more staff and 'in service' cleans taking place at key points across our network. Passengers are asked to wear face coverings (where their health allows), and we have clear social distancing procedures in place, and we have switched to reduced cash handling. Drivers are protected by Perspex screens. Our work in this area saw us accredited with 'Good to Go' certification from industry body, Visit Britain.



At our depot

A range of social distancing measures have been introduced at our depot on Queens Road. One-way systems are in place, queuing protocols are marked out on floors, and certain areas are closed off. We have increased the size of breakout and rest areas and hired more cleaners to ensure that our depot is in tip top condition. Each week, a 'COVID review' takes place to ensure our measures are evaluated and continuously improved.



Much work has taken place around the depot to create safer work environments, particularly in our engineering workshops

Introducing 5S safety protocols

We have adopted the 5S system within our engineering department. The system focuses on putting everything where it belongs and keeping the workplace clean and tidy, making it easier and safer for employees to do their jobs without wasting time or risking injury. The MOT inspection bay has been repainted, new lighting installed, and each pit assigned with wheel chocks, bonnet protectors and steering wheel covers.

Stronger communities

At the heart of our community

From day one, we have sought to embed ourselves at the heart of life in our city. We have engaged with key stakeholders including Transport for Greater Manchester, MPs and councillors, as well as engaging the wider public, to promote bus travel across our city.

Partnership with Salford Red Devils

This year, we announced a new partnership with professional rugby league club, Salford Red Devils, to support their home games by providing dedicated supporters' buses. Bespoke ticketing and stopping arrangements were created in partnership with the club, as well as a host of social media and digital marketing activity to engage their audience and promote sustainable travel.

Manchester United

We supported one of the world's biggest football clubs in 2020 by donating a bus for the day as one of their sets for the 2020/21 season kit launch.



In 2020, we partnered with professional rugby league club Salford Red Devils to provide their home supporters' buses for the new season



Activities

Chatty Bus

We were proud to be part of 'Chatty Bus', a nationwide initiative across Go-Ahead subsidiaries to counter loneliness. We used promotional events to encourage people to talk more to one another on buses and raised awareness of loneliness by holding events at coffee shops in the city. These events were design to particularly appeal to the older generation.

The key comes home

Keen to recognise our history, we joined forces with our neighbours, the Manchester Museum of Transport, to bring home a ceremonial gold key which was used to open our depot Queens Road as the city's first electric tram depot over 119 years ago. We are proud of our heritage, and we are keen to share this with our community.

We are one

Our first birthday celebrations on 2 June 2020 were celebrated with a range of community-led activity. Members of the public sent in videos to thank our team for their hard work, and we 'got the cakes in', visiting local businesses across Manchester and Salford to thank them in turn for their support and hard work. We hand-delivered cakes to key workers at Blackley Fire Station, Manchester City Council, the Broughtons Nursing Home, the Co-Op, and more. We also marked the contribution of our staff through awards known as 'Queens Birthday Honours' named after our Queens Road depot.

Happier customers

Our fleet refurbishment programme has resulted in better reliability for our customers by pinpointing potential issues before they happen.

Better buses

We inherited a dated and tired fleet in Manchester which we are improving quickly. We have commenced plans to ensure all buses comply with the proposed Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone, with 32 buses having exhaust emission retrofits. A sustained refurbishment and repaint programme as well as investment in newer buses, means the fleet is now smarter and well-presented, and has established the Go North West brand in Manchester.

A year for customers

We have delivered a sustained improvement in reliability and punctuality across all our services, with around nine out of ten journeys arriving on time. Many of our core services now run more frequently and we have added 5% more mileage to our network. We have excelled in customer satisfaction survey results on the TfGM Free City Bus service, with improved scores in 21 of 23 categories compared to last year.



Improving our network

Keeping in close touch with customers and a passion for innovation is driving the development of our network. Customers told us that they wanted later buses to coincide with shift times at the Trafford Centre, so we added more evening journeys on the 52 and 100. We introduced the X63, running fast at peak times between Bury, Heywood, Middleton and Manchester, to whisk commuters in and out of the city. Since we enhanced the timetable on our new X63 service, we have been carrying an extra 1,500 customers per week. We're continuing to grow and develop our network according to feedback from partnerships with key stakeholders including TfGM, councillors, MPs, and local business leaders.

We're on WhatsApp

We are the first bus company in Greater Manchester, and one of the first in the country, to introduce the WhatsApp messaging service to our customer services portfolio.

Customers can now WhatsApp our team or send an SMS text to get live answers to their questions, fast.



Frozen and reduced ticket prices

We froze our mobile ticket prices for 2020 and reduced many fares to make our services even more attractive, and introduced a new £4 network evening ticket to tempt customers away from taxis. In light of the complications caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we have frozen student ticket prices for the 2020-21 academic year at 2019-20 levels, to encourage students back to buses.

New brands and tender wins

We have launched three new brands this year – MCR, Orbits and Manchester's 135, bringing a range of improvements to not only vehicles themselves but in service delivery too. Each brand launch has been accompanied by a package of marketing and PR activity to boost the profile and grow the market for our services. Off the back of these improvements, we have been successful in securing a number of additional TfGM tenders, notably the 96 and 415 – the latter of which takes us into Oldham for the first time.

All of these improvements have combined to create 6% passenger growth across our network (pre-COVID-19).



Customer feedback



"I wish other companies worked as hard as Go North West do in keeping buses clean"

30 June 2020



"I'm on the 135 and this is the friendliest driver I've ever met, a credit to your company GNW!"

15 May 2020



"Happy birthday Go North West. You've come a long in 12 months. Here's to more successes"

2 June 2020



Connect with us on social media:

Twitter: @gnwbus

Facebook: Go North West

Instagram: @gnwbus

Better teams

2020 has been a year for people. As we have settled into our new home here in Manchester, we've made recruiting and training the best people our top priority.

This year, we have recruited and trained over 100 new colleagues across all areas of our business – including drivers, engineers, cleaners and admin staff. In addition, we have delivered over 1,500 days of training, including our own in-house Driver CPC courses.

The Qi

As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold, a large proportion of our staff were placed on the government's furlough scheme in order to protect our business and reflect the decreased staffing requirement. To keep those furloughed members of staff in the loop, we introduced a new email newsletter, 'The Qi', featuring news and content from across Queens Road. The Qi is delivered to all colleagues every Monday morning.

Blink key highlights

Our new colleague app, Blink, enables real-time communication from the management team to our workforce, and enables our colleagues to interact directly with each other. Drivers can access their rotas and request holidays, as well as view information about diversions, health and safety, and more. To date, 477 colleagues are registered on Blink, with 99% of registered users logging in at least weekly.

Around the depot

New noticeboards and TV screens have been installed around our depot, providing a more visually effective way to disseminate information to our colleagues. Every month, we hold a 'Business & Breakfast' meeting that is open to all colleagues, where they can grab a bite to eat, chat with managers and find out about the latest company developments.



The Queen's Birthday Honours



The cornerstone of our recognition activities this year were the inaugural Queens Birthday Honours. Coinciding with our first year birthday celebrations, 12 colleagues were surprised and awarded the 'Outstanding Bus Employee' honours for their hard work and commitment over the past 12 months.



Key highlights

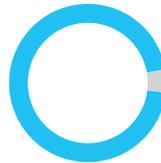
£1m

investment in staff training this year

1,500

days of training delivered

Employee gender diversity



● Male: **584**

● Female: **30**



Cleaner environment

We've invested heavily this year in our fleet, replacing our oldest vehicles with newer, low emission buses, and retrofitting others to bring them up to the same emissions standards as brand new diesel buses.

This year, we embarked on substantial fleet enhancements, spending £3million refurbishing and revitalising the best part of our fleet of over 170 buses. That's on top of 36 new buses we have purchased to enable the oldest buses to leave our fleet.

In January, a new fleet of ten ADL Enviro200 buses went into service on routes 52 and 53, relaunching these routes as 'Orbits' with a refreshed brand, a cleaner look inside, and a far more vibrant external appearance.

These investments mean that 25% of our inherited fleet has now been replaced.



In January 2020, we welcomed a fleet of new buses for our newly-branded Orbits 52 and 53 routes

Buses upgraded to Euro VI

There is an upgrade programme underway to prepare our fleet for Clean Air Zone compliance, including retrofitting emission systems. Nine Wrightbus micro-hybrid Streetlites, nine ADL Enviro400s and 14 Wrightbus/Volvo B5LH hybrids have been converted to Euro VI standard using emission busting Eminox technology. This means that these buses now emit up to 96% less harmful NOx and are as clean in terms of emissions as a brand new diesel bus.

The 19 double deck buses on the 135 have had substantial mechanical and bodywork modernisation, injecting some much-needed improvements into one of our city's core routes.



Our bold, bright new look for the 135 is certainly turning heads – and there have been a range of improvements under the hood for these buses, too

Key data: Go North West

Go North West has been in operation for over a year, therefore prior year data is not available for comparability.

	2020
Cleaner environment	
Euro V, Euro VI and EV buses in fleet (%)	68
Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (kg)	1.80
Happier customers	
Network expansion (%)	5
Passenger miles operated (m)	7
Passenger volume growth (%)	6
Safer working	
Bus accidents per million miles	0.7
RIDDOR incidents per 100 employee	6
Fleet with CCTV (%)	75
Bus fleet which is DDA/PSVAR compliant (%)	100
Better teams	
Number of employees	650
Investment in training (£m)	1.0
Absenteeism rate (%)	6.8
Female employees (%)	4.9
Smarter technology	
Total app downloads	23,600

Key

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](https://www.go-ahead.com)

More information

You can find out more about Go North West by visiting our website gonorthwest.co.uk and more information on how Go-Ahead Group manages sustainability can be found by visiting: go-ahead.com/sustainability

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:

Nigel Featham, Managing Director
Go North West
Boyle Street
Manchester
M8 8UT

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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



Bureau Veritas UK Ltd
October 2020