



# Sustainability Report 2021

**Go South West operates across Plymouth and Cornwall – as the multi-award winning Plymouth Citybus, and the new Go Cornwall Bus. Go South West now has significant operational presence across Devon and Cornwall.**

In April 2020, Plymouth Citybus acquired operations in Cornwall with the start of an eight-year contract to deliver a network of Council-subsidised local bus routes that are essential to local communities but are not commercially viable.

This acquisition led to the creation of Go South West, doubling the Go-Ahead work force across Plymouth and Cornwall.

The origins of Plymouth Citybus can be traced right back to 1892 when its predecessors introduced horse trams to the Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport areas and it carries a strong sense of heritage in the city. Go Cornwall Bus now runs around half of all bus journeys in the county, quickly becoming a central part of Cornish life.

Go South West is instrumental in improving life for the local community, with representation at business, community and charity organisations across the Plymouth and Cornwall travel-to-work areas.

The company operates a modern fleet, employing around 850 staff and carrying over 18 million passengers a year.



## In this report you'll find information on:

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## Find out more:

### Twitter:

@plymouthbus  
@GCBbuses

### Facebook:

/PlymouthBus  
/GCBBuses

### Websites:

plymouthbus.co.uk  
gocornwallbus.co.uk

## Our reporting structure

We are committed to operating our buses in a way which helps put our services at the heart of the communities they serve. This report is split into five sections:

### Stronger Communities

Driving social mobility and supporting the communities we serve.

[Read more on page 06](#)

### Happier Customers

Continuously improving all aspects of our business to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.

[Read more on page 08](#)

### Better Teams

Supporting our colleagues to ensure our business runs the best it can.

[Read more on page 10](#)

### Cleaner Environment

Working towards a cleaner city by doing our bit to reduce our impact on the environment.

[Read more on page 12](#)

### Safer Working

Investing in systems and practices to ensure the safety of our team members and passengers.

[Read more on page 13](#)

# Managing Director's Message

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## 2021 Highlights

- Launch of the Plymouth Citybus and Go Cornwall Bus websites and apps
- Helping around 13,000 people through donations, gifts in kind and time given
- Improving staff facilities across Plymouth and Cornwall
- Training of Mental Health First Aiders
- Community response to the Santa Bus
- Trial of Newquay Park & Ride
- Transporting dignitaries attending the G7 Summit in Cornwall
- Launch of the Go South West Climate Change Strategy

### Welcome to our Sustainability Report 2020/21.

In last year's Sustainability Report, I started by saying that the year's report was truly unique. Yet again, this year we've encountered things that we would never have anticipated.

There's no doubt it's been a tough year with lots of challenges, but there has been lots of good too.

On top of the more tangible results, like working with our partners to create the Bus Service Improvement Plans and Enhanced Partnerships, it's been a year where relationships with people have been at the forefront – working with local authorities to plan for the future, with customers to get them where they need to be and, most importantly, with our team to support them whenever they've needed it.

Our Go South West identity; is taking care of both Plymouth Citybus and Go Cornwall Bus identities. We're still learning about what works best in Cornwall while making adjustments to make Plymouth routes as good as possible.

Yet again, our team has made a massive difference to the community around them, doing their best to make things better by taking on extra duties, carrying out community activities or simply being a friendly face when our passengers get on board.

This was recognised by Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce, who gave us the 2020 Customer Commitment Award.

Our Santa Bus was a perfect example of bringing some joy to the community – due to Covid-19, many families were unable to visit grottos so we brought Santa to them. Carrying Santa, sweets, a snow machine and some helpers, our decorated

double decker spread some cheer and created a shared community experience.

Our staff were particularly proud to be part of the G7 Summit, carrying world leaders and other delegates from Newquay Airport to the venue at Carbis Bay.

It's been great to see passenger numbers slowly increasing as public confidence increases, and we've been doing our part by maintaining enhanced cleaning regimes and reassuring passengers that public transport is safe. Numbers still aren't quite back to what they were, but we're getting students back to school and college, healthcare workers to hospitals and helping people to reconnect with the things they love – something we highlighted in our Connect With Us campaign.

We've put a lot of effort into our recruitment activity. Despite struggles getting paperwork processed with the DVLA, we've taken on record numbers of Drivers who have all gone through our in-house driver training school.

Looking after people here and now has, of course, been important, but we're also looking to the future with our Climate Change Strategy. We, along with the rest of the Go-Ahead Group, are aiming to reach net zero by 2045. You can read more about how we're planning to do this later in this document.

The trial of the Newquay Park and Ride is something we hope to expand in the future, cutting the carbon footprint of locals and visitors and keeping the town centre air clearer at one of its busiest times of year.

It's probably wise not to try and predict what the next 12 months will hold, but whatever happens, I'm confident that our team will continue to look after our passengers, and we will continue to look after them.

*Richard Stevens*



## Awards

- Devon and Plymouth Chamber of Commerce 2020 Customer Commitment Award
- Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Award – Silver

# Better Teams

## Learning & development, rewards & recognition, engagement, health & wellbeing, diversity & inclusion

At Go South West, we pride ourselves on putting people first, from training and development to health and wellbeing. 'Every journey taken care of' includes individuals' work and career journeys.

We've expanded our Marketing Team to include a Communications and PR Manager and a Graphic Designer. As well as helping to promote our external presence, this gives us some extra capacity to concentrate on internal communication and making sure every employee can get their voice heard.

We also have internal forums, set up to concentrate on specific issues and areas of the business. One of these forums, Go Well, focuses on the health and wellbeing of our team and is made up of colleagues from across the business, both geographically and in terms of their job roles. Actions are taken on what is discussed in these

forums, including training staff members to be Mental Health First Aiders or Mental Health Awareness trained, so staff have someone to contact if they, or someone they know, is distressed. There is also a Quiet Room at the Milehouse depot if people need a peaceful and calm space.

Covering a wide geographical area has presented challenges in terms of ensuring everyone feels a part of the team. To counter this, managers have been making visits to our sites across Cornwall to give everyone the chance to speak to the Senior Leadership Team face to face regularly.

We're continuing to recognise the loyalty and dedication of our longest-serving staff, with special certificates and badges for staff who reach their 5 year work anniversary and every 5 year increment thereafter.



Richard in Penzance depot



## Key Highlights

**792**  
Employees

OVER **£150k**  
Spent on staff training

**£190.24**  
Training spend  
per employee



**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
We invest in people Platinum

### All employees

Male

**87%**

Female

**13%**

### Senior Management

Male

**71.5%**

Female

**28.5%**

### Gender Pay Gap

Plymouth Citybus has no median pay gap. Nationally, there is an average 17.3% gender pay gap (2019).

# Happier Customers

## Accessible travel, attracting customer, keeping them safe during COVID-19, apps, customer satisfaction

Reassuring customers has been a key priority over the past year – while passenger numbers have risen, there is still some hesitancy from some customers about going back to public transport.

We've maintained an enhanced cleaning regime on all our buses to reduce the spread of viruses, we supply hand sanitiser for staff and passengers and we're continuing to encourage passengers to wear masks when they travel. We've continued to update our signage and guidance for passengers in line with the current government guidelines.

Digital technology is playing its part too. We've launched our new website and app for Plymouth Citybus and Go Cornwall Bus, allowing Customers to plan their journeys, buy tickets and track buses in real time. We're also encouraging passengers to use

contactless payments, either by card or via the app. This reduces cash-handling, making payments more Covid-19 secure and allowing passengers to board more quickly.

For those who prefer to speak face to face, we opened our newly refurbished Travel Centre on Royal Parade, Plymouth, which has now been fitted out to improve the experience for passengers. Improvements include a large display board showing current departure times for customers to check.

Our drivers and customer experience team have received lots of praise for the work they've done, with passengers writing comments like 'your drivers have always been welcoming,' and 'I am so unconditionally grateful to you.'



Royal Parade Travel Centre



## Key Highlights



Winners of the  
Devon and Plymouth  
Chamber Customer  
Satisfaction Award

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**36,402**

Plymouth Citybus  
app downloads

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Go Cornwall Bus  
and Plymouth  
Citybus websites  
and apps launched

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**14,226**

Go Cornwall Bus  
app downloads

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**190**

Compliments  
received

# Stronger communities

## Charity work, local sponsorships, working with communities, how we engage, working with local businesses.

As a company, we're proud to be a key part of our community and have done our bit to improve people's lives where we can.

We've supported many local charities, contributed to community events and worked with partners across Plymouth and Cornwall to make the area a better place for everyone. Contributions have even included buses which have been transformed by groups for use in community projects.

The tragic Keyham shooting this year affected a large section of our Plymouth community, and we have supported the local community and our own staff to ensure the appropriate support is available to them. We ensured the company was represented in the official Book of Condolence and laid flowers at one of the tribute sites. We shared helpline details via social media for anyone in Plymouth who was struggling and participated in a one-minute silence. We're continuing to engage with local projects put in place to support those affected by the tragedy.

Meanwhile, in Cornwall, we piloted a summer Park and Ride into Newquay, reducing the amount of traffic in the town at its busiest time of year, making it safer for residents and tourists and improving the air quality.

We've worked with a local business to source our hand sanitizer, helping Cornwall-based Colwith Farm Distillery when demand for their core product plummeted. We're also active members of both the Cornwall and Devon & Plymouth Chambers of Commerce in order to engage with and support the wider business community.

## Key Highlights

Over  
**£37k**

worth of contributions, including cash donations, gifts in kind and dedicated time

**270**  
organisations benefitted

**13,000**  
people reached



CORNWALL  
COUNCIL  
Kernow rag Kernow

5015

**Transport  
for Cornwall**  
Kernow rag Kernow

WA70 DZP

# Cleaner Environment

## Tackling climate change is at the core of our environmental initiatives, which includes transitioning to a low carbon fleet and premises.

Climate Change is a key topic for Go South West and is also increasingly in the public eye. We are continuously looking at ways to create awareness amongst our stakeholders and reduce our impacts in order to be a part of the solution in addressing the climate emergency.

It's also a critical issue for us to address this in order to keep our business healthy and profitable in the long-run, taking into account the future legislation, carbon pricing, legal requirements and effects of climate change which are going to increasingly have an impact on our operations.

We want to protect the environment for our entire community and our new Climate Change Strategy (please see more details on the next page), looks at ways to deliver world class, inclusive, community-focused, environmentally considerate bus services across the region by 2035.

We recognise our part in delivering an evolutionary mobility solution by providing green connectivity for all. We are undertaking a commitment to reducing our emissions by 75% by 2035 and becoming Net Zero by 2045.

Over a third of all our buses are zero or low carbon emissions. As we replace older vehicles in our fleet, the environmental performance continues to improve.

Our absolute CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased in the last year, from 11,367 tonnes to 15,975 tonnes, but this is due to the expansion of our fleet – running buses across the whole of Cornwall in addition to Plymouth has, of course, increased the total volume of emissions, but the figures show that our buses are running more efficiently and our overall carbon emissions per vehicle mile have actually

reduced from 1.61 kg to 1.28kg.

To increase air quality and reduce air emissions caused by our operations, we consider carefully which buses are used on which routes. For example, Mutley Plain in Plymouth has high levels of air pollution, so we use our low emission buses as far as possible along that stretch of road. In Cornwall, due to the hilly nature of the area, we have to use buses with more power, and this may mean slightly higher emission levels to make sure the vehicles can carry people around the area. However, we're constantly looking for ways to reduce our air emissions using these routes.

Go South West has ISO 50001 standards, which means continuous improvement of our energy management as well as ensuring all legislative and regulatory requirements are met.

All our staff have been made aware of our commitments to the environment and will be given the opportunity to contribute their own suggestions to improve our environmental performance.

	2021	2020
<b>Average fleet diesel efficiency (MPG)</b>	9.51	7.87
<b>Average bus gas efficiency (kWh/mile)</b>	11.191	10.795
<b>Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (all energy) (kg)</b>	1.28	1.61

# Our climate change strategy

In July 2021 we launched our first Go-Ahead Group Climate Change Strategy detailing how the Group as a whole is reducing our impact on the climate and also how we are managing the impact of climate change on our operations. As a public transport company we have an exciting opportunity to help the transport sector decarbonise; a full bus can take approximately 75 cars off the road and so modal shift is critical to decarbonise the transport sector.

→ <https://www.go-ahead.com/sustainability/climate-change>

## Our Group Climate Change Strategy addresses 5 priority areas:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: identify how climate change is affecting us and plan how we are managing those impacts and opportunities.
- 2 Decarbonisation: of our premises, ancillary fleet, and bus fleet. Our Group target is to reduce our carbon footprint by 75%
- 3 Air quality: from our fleet but also cleaning air via our innovations such as air filtering bus. We have a series of ambitious reduction targets for carbon monoxide (17%), hydrocarbons (49%), nitrogen oxide (63%) and particulate matter (50%) by 2025.
- 4 Water: including our use, leaks and sourcing. As a Group we are aiming to reduce water use by 25% by 2025.
- 5 Waste: including recycling and waste to landfill. As a Group we are aiming to increase recycling rates to 60% by 2025.

Here at Go South West, our strategy focuses on providing green connectivity for all, reducing our emissions by 75% by 2035 and being Net Zero by 2045. Air quality is also a central point for us because of the poor air quality in some areas we cover, such as the population-dense areas of Plymouth.

Our strategy highlights include:

- 1 Climate change adaptation: planning to avoid and/ or mitigate potential failures on infrastructure due to extreme weather, heat and flooding, for example, meaning cancellations and diversion of routes, loss of power and communication, and difficulty getting staff to work.
- 2 Decarbonisation: moving our fleet of vehicles to low/ zero carbon sources, such as gas and electric, and reporting regularly on the efficiency of these vehicles.
- 3 Air quality: continuing to trial new air-filtering technology alongside local councils and universities to find innovative ways to improve air quality.
- 4 Water: monitoring water use and reduce the amount of water lost through leaks or faults.
- 5 Waste: Reporting tonnage of waste and the amount recycled every quarter, with the aim of increasing the percentage recycled.

# Our climate change strategy



## Climate change adaptation

1. Identify risks and vulnerabilities
2. Quantify costs and source funding
3. Identify risks to properties
4. Work with suppliers to identify and reduce exposure and vulnerabilities
5. Develop business cases for adaptation measures
6. Work with partners

### We are:

1. Developing a risk register
2. Flagging weather-related incidences and monitoring every 3 months
3. Working with key partners such as local authorities to tackle wider issues

### Group targets:

1. Risk management: Risk assessment, mitigation plan, and measures embedded by 2023
2. Review supply chain: Identify mitigation activities for critical suppliers by 2022
3. Property assessments: Identify local extreme weather predictions, develop premise safeguarding plan, assess high-risk areas, and embed actions and reviews by 2022



## Mitigation: Decarbonisation

1. Bus fleet decarbonisation
2. Ancillary fleet decarbonisation
3. Decarbonisation of properties
4. Develop net/carbon zero commitment

### We are:

1. Transitioning to an EV/hydrogen fleet over next 15 years
2. Working with industry partners, suppliers and technology developers to find the best vehicles
3. Installing LED lighting in our premises
4. Monitoring ancillary vehicles to determine the best time to move to electronic or hydrogen vehicles

### Group targets:

1. Net zero business by 2045
2. Zero-emission bus fleet in the UK by 2035
3. Non-diesel rail fleet by 2035  
Nondiesel rail fleet by 2035
4. By 2035 reduce carbon emissions by 75%



### Mitigation: Air quality

1. Improve bus fleet by procuring electric vehicles
2. Purchase new buses at the latest emissions standards
3. Remove older lower emissions standards vehicles from the fleet
4. Work on bus priority solutions with local

#### We are:

1. Gradually upgrading our fleet as and when commercially viable
2. Trialling innovative technology from the University of Plymouth in partnership with Plymouth City Council

#### Group targets:

1. By 2025, reduce:
2. Carbon monoxide (CO) by 17%
3. Hydrocarbons (HC) by 49%
4. Nitrogen oxides (NOx) by 63%
5. Particulate matter (PM) by 55%



### Mitigation: Water

1. Address leaks better
2. Reduce third party use of our water
3. Reduce water use
4. Improve water sourcing

#### We are:

1. Aiming to replace the main buswash at the Milehouse Depot
2. Investigating water recycling/ reclaim units
3. Improving our water consumption monitoring and reporting

#### Group target:

1. By 2025, reduce water use by 25%



### Mitigation: Waste

1. Improve bus waste management contracts
2. Increase recycling rates
3. Behaviour change programmes for customers and colleagues
4. Reduce waste in supply chain and operational

#### We are:

1. Improving waste reporting to monitor more closely where waste comes from and how it is dealt
2. Encouraging behaviour change with staff, suppliers and customers to reduce waste and increase recycling

#### Group target:

1. By 2025, increase waste recycling rate to 60%

# Summary



## Adaptation

Climate change is already upon us. Here at Go South West, we have already experienced hotter summers, impacting on our drivers and passengers; and wetter winters, affecting road flooding and accelerated vegetation growth which has increased bus strike incidences.

We have started to develop our risk register, with our top strategic and operations risks related to damage to our infrastructure due to extreme weather, eg. road closures, loss of power and interruptions to our supply chains.

To continue tracking impacts we are leveraging our existing incidence report process to flag weather-related events. We will revise this data on a 3-month basis to improve our risk and opportunities register. This will help us to quantify those risks and then understand how we need to adapt. For example, we need to work closely with local authorities and other partners to ensure a joined-up, effective approach, which will hopefully be enabled by the Enhanced Partnership agreements.



## Decarbonisation

As a bus company, our biggest carbon impact is from our bus fleet. We will transition our fleet to EV/hydrogen over the next 15 years, in line with Group targets. This means working with industry partners, suppliers and technology developers to find the best vehicles to keep our services running smoothly as well as in a more environmentally sustainable way.

We'll be working with our staff to encourage greater energy efficiency and look to install LED lighting in our premises to reduce energy use in our offices and will closely monitor our ancillary fleet leases to evaluate when is the best time to transition towards electric or hydrogen vehicles.



## Air quality

Our main impacts to air quality are air emissions from vehicles. Our plan is to gradually reduce through these emissions by upgrading our vehicles when the funding and opportunities become available and are commercially viable. We already trial innovative technology from the University of Plymouth in partnership with Plymouth City Council, and we'll continue to support the development



## Water

Our highest area of water consumption is bus washing. To reduce this, we are putting together a business plan to replace the current bus wash equipment at Milehouse Depot, investigate water reclaim/recycling units and installing a larger surface drain to catch water carried out of the wash by buses. Our anticipated water saving to 2025 is 25% on our current usage.



## Waste

Our waste is 118 tonnage metric, of which 99.9% is diverted from landfill. Our recycling rate is 46.7%. Our main waste streams are metal, glass and waste fluids from buses.

Our tactics to reduce waste includes looking at source of waste (e.g. from suppliers packaging), improving how we manage waste (e.g. putting waste into recycling bins) and how waste is managed when removed. Our main projects are to:

- Improve waste reporting: identifying all waste streams and developing a reporting process to enable meaningful data collection and comparison
- Encourage behaviour change: engage with suppliers, customers and colleagues regarding waste creation and disposal to encourage more responsible use of resources.



# Safer Working

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## Health and safety audit, COVID-19 responses, mental health, governance on safety, use of technology

COVID-19 has been an obvious focus for health and safety, it's something taken seriously across the whole business.

The introduction of the Go Check app has allowed all drivers to do their first vehicle checks of the day via their mobile phone. This automatically sends reports to our engineering team, allowing them to act on any faults quickly and schedule work more efficiently – reducing the chance of faults going unnoticed or unattended.

More buses passed their MOT (an annual test conducted by the Government) equivalent this year (97%) than last year (94%) due to the lower average age of our fleet.

On board, we have cough screens to protect drivers, as well as supplying sanitiser for staff and passengers, and using an innovative surface sanitizer providing long-term protection against bacteria and pathogens on all bus surfaces.

All staff are registered on the Hapi app, through which they can read articles about various health and wellbeing topics, as well as access an online GP for video or phone consultations.

With an increasing focus on mental health, all staff have access to telephone counselling. 11 members of staff have now qualified as Mental Health First Aiders, with another 6 trained in Mental Health Awareness, so every member of staff has someone to speak to if they are worried about their own mental health or that of someone close to them.

## Key Highlights

# 17

**accidents per million miles – down from 19 in previous two years**

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**4 RIDDOR accidents per 1,000 employees – down from 5 last year**

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# 11

**Mental Health First Aiders and 6 Mental Health Awareness trained**

# Key Data: Go South West

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
<b>Stronger Communities</b>			
Community investment per employee (£)	47.75	100.20	241.85
Stakeholder events (number)	380	299	352
<b>Cleaner Environment</b>			
CO <sub>2</sub> total from all scope 1&2 sources (tonnes)	15975	11367	11797
Carbon emissions per vehicle mile (kg)	1.28	1.61	1.64
Average fleet diesel efficiency (MPG)	9.51	7.87	7.58
Water use (m <sup>3</sup> )	2934	3433	7487
Total waste (tonnage)	118	111	n/a
Recycling rate (%)	47	55	n/a
Landfill diversion rate (%)	99.9	99.9	n/a
Adaptation: yearly target completion: 2020/21 risk register & mitigation plans for top risks (Y/N)	Y	n/a	n/a
<b>Happier Customers</b>			
Customer satisfaction (%)	n/a	94%	93%
Deregulated/Local bus punctuality (%)	87%	89%	89%
Passenger journeys (m)	9858	12569	16652
<b>Safety</b>			
Bus fleet which is DDA compliant (number)	296	259	179
RIDDOR accidents per 100 employees	0.4	0.5	0.4
<b>Better Teams</b>			
Number of employees	792	750	559
Employee engagement (%)	n/a	n/a	82%
Training spend per employee (£)	190	138	206
Female employees (%)	13%	12%	12%
Ethnic minority employees (%)	2%	3%	2%

## Key

2020/2021 figures reflect the launch of Go Cornwall Bus services in 2020, the reduction in services due to Covid-19 pandemic and government regulations and includes yearly averages.

\*\*Per kilometre travelled

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 South West by visiting our websites [plymouthbus.co.uk](http://plymouthbus.co.uk) and [transportforcornwall.co.uk](http://transportforcornwall.co.uk) and for more information on how Go South West manages sustainability can be found by visiting;

[go-ahead.com/sustainability](http://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:

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## Summary Verification Statement from Bureau Veritas UK Ltd

Bureau Veritas UK Limited (Bureau Veritas) has provided verification for The Go-Ahead Group plc (Go-Ahead) over selected sustainability indicators contained within the Group Sustainability Report. The information and data reviewed in this verification process covered the period 28th June 2020 to 3rd July 2021.

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

[www.go-ahead.com](http://www.go-ahead.com)



Bureau Veritas UK Ltd  
November 2021

We're part of The  
**Go-Ahead**  
Group