

Wrightbus bags order for further 117 electric buses bound for England

Ballymena bus manufacturer Wrightbus has secured an order for 117 electric buses destined for use across four English council areas.

The deal, worth £25.3 million, has been signed with operator First Bus with funding from the government's Zero-Emission Buses Regional Area scheme, which allows local transport authorities to bid for funding for zero emission buses and supporting infrastructure.

First Bus will operate the new vehicles, 55 of which will be purchased by Norfolk County Council, 28 by Portsmouth City Council and Hampshire County Council, 25 by West Yorkshire Combined Authority and nine by City of York Council.

All the buses will be manufactured at Wrightbus's Ballymena factory.

"We are delighted to be working with First Bus to further demonstrate their commitment to offering zero-emission public transport in these areas," Robert Best, director of engineering at Wrightbus, said. "It has been a real team effort between Wrightbus and First Bus to deliver this exciting project, which will help passengers enjoy cleaner transport.

"We're immensely proud of the reputation we have forged in the zero-emission transport sector and the important role we are playing in the UK's ambitions for decarbonisation.

"Our double deck battery electric buses are 44% more efficient 'grid to wheel', saving energy costs and carbon.

The move is part of the Government's wider £3 billion National Bus Strategy to significantly improve bus services, with new priority lanes, lower and simpler fares, more integrated ticketing and higher frequencies.

Janette Bell, Managing Director at First Bus, welcomed the deal.

"We are delighted to be accelerating investment in the electrification of our bus fleet and infrastructure, supported by co-funding from the Department for Transport. As leaders in sustainable mobility, we are fully aligned with the Government's ambitions for a net zero carbon transport system.

"We are rapidly transforming our business with zero-emission bus fleets and will continue to work closely with central and local government across the UK to deliver our decarbonisation plans."