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For immediate release

The world's first electric retrofitted double decker sight seeing bus launches in York!

One of York's renowned City Sightseeing buses has become the first double-decker bus in the world to get an electric makeover, thanks to a successful bid for funding by City of York Council.

The City Sightseeing bus, operated by Transdev, will be in operation from September after becoming the first double decker to be converted from diesel to pure electric with lithium ion batteries, similar to those used by mobile phones.

The council was awarded £75,433 in October 2013 to convert the 15-year old City Sightseeing bus to fully electric drive, after successfully bidding for the Department for Transport's (DfT) Clean Bus Technology Fund. The bus will travel all day without needing to charge.

Baroness Kramer said: "This is the first electric double decker bus conversion in the World. This Sightseeing bus will not only showcase York's many attractions, but also the huge benefits that low carbon vehicles can bring to our cities.

"The UK is leading the electric charge when it comes to plug-in transport. I am delighted to see York sharing our vision, fully supporting an industry which is also a driver for economic growth, while bringing important environmental benefits such as an improved air quality".

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The electric retrofitted bus will eliminate the emission of 33 tons of CO2 and more than 535kg of poisonous NOx per year and will also reduce operating costs of the vehicle by more than £20k per year.

Cllr David Levene, Cabinet Member of Transport at City of York Council, said: “York is again leading the way in improving air quality and bus travel. We’re the first city in the world to launch the new electric double decker City Sightseeing bus as a result of being the first city in the UK to adopt a Low Emission Strategy.

“This will all feed into our draft Air Quality Action plan which is set to go out consultation soon, which will provide residents and tourists with a better use of transport and improved air quality, which is an important issue in York.”

Richard Jackson at Transdev, said “Thousands of tourists and residents travel on our popular City Sightseeing buses every year so it’s fantastic news that through this funding we’ll be able to offer an even better travelling experience, whilst at the same time helping to improve air quality in York by converting to an electric bus.

“We’re also delighted that we’ll be the first operator in the UK to benefit from this opportunity and have the world’s very first double decker bus electric makeover!”

The transformed bus, manufactured by Sheffield based Magtec will join fifteen new electric buses which will provide passenger journeys on the streets of York from September, following a successfully bid to the DfT for £1,388k in 2013, made available through the Green Bus Fund from DfT.

Marcus Jenkins of Magtec, said: We are delighted to work with City of York Council and Transdev to get the world’s first retrofit electric double decker sight seeing bus into service.

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“The retrofit conversion from diesel to electric of the City Sightseeing bus will produce a cleaner, greener transport experience for visitors as they enjoy the sights of York.

“Magtec’s ability to retrofit this type of bus with our electric drive train systems opens up a world of opportunity for similar local authorities and operators to upgrade their existing vehicle fleets. This is the first retrofit system for buses that provide the benefits of zero emission in operation that also makes commercial sense for the vehicle operator.”

This also forms part of City of York Council’s Low Emission Strategy (the first strategy to be adopted in the UK in 2012) which aims to enable the uptake of low emission vehicles and reduce emissions of air quality pollutants and greenhouse gases.

Thousands of people use the City Sightseeing buses every year, including residents and tourists, which supports York as one of the UK’s top visitor destinations.

Jane Lady Gibson, Chairman of Visit York, said: “This is good news for York and we’re confident this will prove popular with many of the city’s seven million visitors.’

For more information on bus travel in York visit www.itravellyork.info

ENDS

An additional £23,400 Clean Bus Technology Funding from DfT was used to retrofit two diesel buses operated by Reliance, along the A19 route, with Selective Catalytic Reduction Trap (SCRT) exhaust technology which reduces emissions of NOx and fine particles.

The council’s five key priorities for 2011-2015 are:

- **Create jobs and grow the economy**
- **Get York moving**
- **Build strong communities**

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- **Protect vulnerable people**
- **Protect the environment**

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· The council's cabinet member for Transport is Councillor David Levene on 07758739099

· The council's cabinet member for Environmental Services, Planning and Sustainability is Councillor Dave Merrett on 07765558514

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