

Request for information - Communications between the Mayor and Electric and Hydrogen Bus manufacturers

Date: 17 February 2022


From Wrightbus Chief Executive
To Mayor of London

I am writing in response to your recent exchange with Assembly Member Pidgeon regarding hydrogen buses in London at the Mayor's Question Time on 10 Feb.

I'd like to update you on the performance of the existing fleet of hydrogen buses in London, as well as a new financing model which we have created that would allow TfL to buy more zero emission buses despite the challenging times. I would also like to invite you to visit our site in Ballymena when you visit Northern Ireland in the near future to see the EV and fuel cell technology in our manufacturing plant.

I'm pleased that you remain enthusiastic about the role that UK-made hydrogen buses can play in decarbonising TfL's bus fleet, as well as helping to sustain and create manufacturing jobs across the country at the same time. As you may know, our hydrogen buses include parts sourced by 42 UK companies, making them a true 'Made in the UK' success story. Wrightbus' hydrogen buses have now travelled 336,000 miles in London, saving 562,500kg of carbon from being emitted on streets across the capital (Compared to EU6 diesel equivalent bus). As you may recall from when we met at the launch of the bus fleet, the driver feedback on these buses has been very positive and we understand customers are enjoying the smoother and quieter ride.

In your discussion with Assembly Member Pidgeon, you mentioned that hydrogen buses cost around £600,000, while battery electric equivalents cost £400,000 and that this "does prohibit going for hydrogen".



Furthermore, through our new sister company, FUZE, we are bringing together asset finance and leasing to offer a complete funding solution for the hydrogen and battery electric ecosystems required for the deployment of zero-emission bus fleets. In practice, what this could mean for TfL is that we could enable the procurement of more zero emission buses for a monthly fee which is comparable to diesel today for operators in most cases.

Jo Bamford, Executive Chairman of Wrightbus, and I would be delighted to discuss our latest UK-made zero emission bus products and financing options if you were able to find the time to visit our manufacturing site in Ballymena.

I would also like to take this opportunity to update you on the recent decision to temporarily withdraw the TfL hydrogen buses from service. During a routine inspection in Aberdeen of one of our hydrogen double decker buses in operation there, we identified an issue with a rear mounting bracket. After further investigation, we've made the decision to carry out preventative maintenance across the entire fleet, which we intend to take place at the Perivale depot. I am keen to highlight that this is a mechanical problem and not a hydrogen fuel-related issue. We're working around the clock to get these buses back on the road as

soon as possible and are collaborating with the Metroline.

Date 30 March 2022
From Mayor of London
To Wrightbus Chief Executive

Thank you for welcoming me to the Wrightbus site in Ballymena on 7 March and for your earlier email of 17 February regarding zero emission buses in London.

I am grateful for the important role that Wrightbus is playing in supporting the rollout of zero emission buses in London, which are critical to tackling toxic air pollution and reducing carbon emissions in our city. It was wonderful to meet in person some of the skilled workers whose jobs are supported by London's investment in zero emission transport. I look forward to continuing to work with you to drive this critical transition forwards.

There is no UK recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic without a London recovery and there is no London recovery without a properly funded transport network in the capital. Wrightbus is a shining example of the wider benefits that investment in London's transport system generates across the UK. Our investment in further zero emission buses is dependent upon the government providing Transport for London (TfL) with a long-term capital funding deal and I would welcome your support in calling on the Department for Transport to engage constructively with TfL to resolve this uncertainty without delay.

Finally, as you know, I believe trade unions are a vital part of any workplace. I was glad to be able to meet with Unite representatives whilst at Wrightbus and I want to encourage you to consider formal recognition of Unite at the site.