**UK NEW BUS & COACH REGISTRATIONS**      
16 May 2024(data for Q1 2024)        
**Hi-res charts available via Dropbox:** <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cmgk7lmdzbyklhizwvl6h/AFbD-562M5hyLVOZqu2ELvs?rlkey=45g7845s786i2otrucirwcbvo&st=jtpisfew&dl=0>

**Britain’s bus market begins 2024 with green boost**

1. UK’s rollout of new buses, coaches and minibuses accelerates in first quarter, surging 74.6%.
2. Minibus demand more than doubles, while single and double decker uptake rises 33.6% and 70.0% respectively.
3. Zero emission demand rises by 22.9%, boosting access to mass green mobility – but sensible derogation must come sooner to open up earlier adoption of battery electric minibuses.

**Thursday 16 May, 2024** The UK’s new bus, coach and minibus market grew by 74.6% in the first three months of 2024 with 1,690 public service vehicles joining roads across the country, according to new figures published today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT). The growth reflects the steady recovery of the passenger road transport sector since the pandemic, when ridership levels fell sharply.1

Growth was driven by a more than doubling in demand for new minibuses, up 118.8% to 851 units – with these vehicles serving crucial needs across UK society, from schools to health and social care and the third sector. Fleet investment in the latest single and double decker buses, meanwhile, grew by 33.6% and 70.0% to 533 units and 306 units respectively, as operators responded to increasing passenger numbers,2 helped by measures such as the Bus Fare Cap Grant.

Demand was also greener, with 322 zero emission models joining the road, up 22.9% on quarter one last year, keeping the sector at the vanguard of Britain’s decarbonisation of road mobility. Buses can be less complex to decarbonise given their depot-based circular and consistent routes, and timely rollout of the next round of Zero Emission Bus Regional Area funding is crucial so that all UK regions can benefit – from improved air quality and lower noise pollution to a more enjoyable customer experience.

Minibuses, meanwhile, remain the biggest overall segment of the market but face special challenges in moving to zero emission operations. A major barrier to earlier adoption is licensing restrictions that prevent standard driving licence holders from driving a minibus that weighs more than 4.25 tonnes – putting many zero emission models out of reach for operators. A sensible regulatory derogation to remove this barrier is set to come into effect but not until 2025. Bringing the date forward to 2024 would give operators the go-ahead they need to invest today, providing some of the most vulnerable people in society with better access to the very latest green technology.

**Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive,**said, “Britain’s road passenger transport sector is continuing its recovery amid rising ridership levels and growing operator confidence. The UK has been particularly successful at decarbonising the new bus market, however, that green growth must extend to all sectors, in particular minibuses. Operators are ready to switch to greener mobility but timely action is essential to make sure the journey to net zero includes everyone.”

**Notes to editors**

1 UK annual bus statistics 2020-2021, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2021>

2 UK annual bus statistics 2022-2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2023>

**About SMMT and the UK automotive industry**

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) is one of the largest and most influential trade associations in the UK. It supports the interests of the UK automotive industry at home and abroad, promoting the industry to government, stakeholders and the media.

The automotive industry is a vital part of the UK economy and integral to supporting the delivery of the agendas for levelling up, net zero, advancing global Britain, and the plan for growth. Automotive-related manufacturing contributes £78 billion turnover and £16 billion value added to the UK economy, and typically invests around £3 billion each year in R&D. With more than 208,000 people employed in automotive manufacturing, and some 800,000 in total across the wider sector, the industry trades globally, with exports worth £94 billion accounting for 10% of all UK goods exports.

More than 25 manufacturing brands build more than 70 models of vehicles in the UK, plus an array of specialist small volume manufacturers, supported by some 2,500 supply chain businesses and some of the world's most skilled engineers. Many of these jobs are outside London and the Southeast, with wages that are around 14% higher than the UK average. The automotive sector also supports jobs in other key sectors – including advertising, finance and logistics.

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