Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 737 September 2025



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

www.essexbus.org.uk

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First Essex Vehicles on Loan

Further to last month, where we reported that Volvo B9TL / Wright Eclipse Gemini 2 36184 (BN12 JYG) entered service at Basildon on 25 July 2025, this only operated from there on 25th & 26th before returning to Norwich, with Pride liveried Enviro 400 MMC 33981, which had been at Norwich for the Pride event on 26th, returning to Essex at the same time. Both were back in service at their home depots on Monday 28th. **William Morrison** managed to capture the **above** shot of 36184 outside Basildon Railway Station on 26th. **Below**: A First Eastern Counties vehicle that was on loan for just slightly longer was Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 37722 (YJ09 OBT) from 1-10 July 2025 to cover for other buses going to Silverstone for the British Grand Price event, as reported last month. Still in Bradford livery, it is seen on route X30 at Eastwood Rise, Leigh on 5 July. **John G Lidstone**



Essex Bus Magazine the journal of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group
Issue 737 September 2025



Above: As reported last month, Saturday 26 July 2025 was the last day of First Essex commercial journeys on Colchester - Halstead route 88. Enviro 400 33676 (SN12 AEX) is seen on 1440 Colchester - Halstead 88 in Earls Colne High Street, with Earls Colne parish church in the background. According to Bustimes, 33676 started on 0650 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 0738 return and then stayed on 88/A for the rest of the day and into the evening, finishing on 2140 Halstead - Colchester 88A. **Robert Appleton**

Front Cover & Right: After being used as a special events and private hire vehicle since being acquired from First Glasgow in January this year (including football celebration tours as described in EBM 734), 301 (33908, SN11 FPA) entered service on Southend open top route 99 on 29 July 2025. Although in fleet livery rather than a special 99 livery, it has been fitted with route 99 adverts. Note, the 'Ensign' part of the fleet name does not have the usual black lining. It is seen at Shoeburyness East Beach terminus on 29th. A full width rear destination display has been fitted, although in this case not being used to its full effect.
Both **John G Lidstone**



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Owen stocks a wide range of colour photos, please send an SAE for details.

Subscriptions
The calendar year subscription for 2025 is £29 for printed copies sent by post, or £20 for electronic pdf copies sent by e-mail. New members may join from any month, but subscriptions will always run to December from whichever month the member chooses, please ask for the relevant price.
Please contact Richard Delahoy, 272 Shoebury Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3TT
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EBM Extra
EBM is published monthly. In addition, we aim to publish two Extras each year full of historical features. These are supplied to members free of charge, subject to funding.

Membership Records & Data Protection
A statement of our compliance with the GDPR is available on our website or by post. For any membership or Data Protection issues please contact Richard Delahoy, address above.

Reports, Articles & Photographs
Members' reports, articles and photos (prints, slides or preferably jpgs) are always welcome. Please send to the Editor or relevant Sub-Editor. The editors exercise discretion to publish contributions in full, in part or not at all and cannot guarantee publication in any particular month.

Target Dates for EBM 738

Reports to Sub-Editors	**20 September**
Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	**26 September**
Dispatch by Printers on or before	**4 October**

The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 27th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

Views expressed in EBM do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group or officers. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy, but the Group cannot accept responsibility for any errors published.

Group Notices

Group Meetings

Dates for meetings for the rest of **2025** are as follows.

Main Meetings

These (usually featuring a slide show) resume on Saturday afternoons on a bi-monthly basis from October at **The Quaker Meeting House, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford, CM1 2QL**.

18 October: Robert Appleton, 'Buses of West Anglia'. King's Lynn, Cambridge and Peterborough areas. To include Cambus, Viscount, Stagecoach East and Eastern Counties plus some independents. Start date September 1984 when Cambus was formed out of the western area of Eastern Counties.

13 December: Alan Osborne, 'Essex Buses of Yesteryear'. A miscellany of views of buses in Essex over 60 years from 1965.

Social Meetings

Thursday afternoons **18 September, 16 October, 20 November** and **18 December**.

At **'The Globe' Public House, Rainsford Road, CM1 2QL**, 1300 (lunch, optional) for 1400 (start of meeting) to 1700.

The Quaker Meeting House is a five-ten minute walk from Chelmsford Bus & Railway Stations. There is very limited on-site parking, accessed via Cedar Avenue West, we would ask that you leave these for those less able to walk. The meetings are being held jointly with our good friends at The Omnibus Society, Eastern & Southern Branch, who are very generously paying for the room hire so entrance is FREE.

'The Globe' Public House is a couple of minutes past the Quaker Meeting House (coming from the stations) on the other side of the road. There is a car park but you must register your car at the terminal on the bar on arrival otherwise a penalty charge will apply.

Group members are also invited to attend a presentation by Bill Hiron, Omnibus Society President for 2025, at the **Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford** (just round the corner from the stations), on **Saturday 29 November 2025**, 1400 for 1430.

The Running Card

Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.



Saturday 13 September: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN1 2EY. * GROUP STALL AT THIS EVENT *

Sunday 14 September: Autumn Running Day. Epping Ongar Railway. 'Blue Triangle and beyond … Commemorating 40 years since the formation of the Blue Triangle Bus Company, Romford'. * NOTE REVISED DATE *

Saturday / Sunday 20/21 September: 1940s Event. North Norfolk Railway, Sheringham NR26 8RA.

Saturday / Sunday 27/28 September: London Event. East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville NR33 8BL. Open to 9pm on Saturday.

Saturday 4 October: Classic Vehicles Day. Ipswich Transport Museum, Cobham Road IP3 9JD.

Saturday 4 October: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar. Village Hall CM16 7ER.

Sunday 19 October: Transport Festival. London Bus Museum, Brooklands KT13 0QS

Saturday / Sunday 25/26 October: Halloween Event. East Anglian Transport Museum, Carlton Colville NR33 8BL.

Saturday 1 November: Aldenham Spectacular. Allum Hall 2 Allum Road, Elstree WD3 6PJ.

Saturday 15 November: Enfield Transport Bazaar. St Stephens Church Hall, Village Road EN1 2EY.

For a comprehensive list of forthcoming events, with links to relevant websites for more information, see https://www.classicbuses.co.uk/++Events-diary.html. Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

The EBEG Needs You - Facebook Page Manager

Further to previous issues, we are pleased to report that Paul Naylor has agreed to take over this role from Richard Delahoy, effective immediately. If members have any topical items that they think we should feature on our Facebook page, please send them to Paul at ebegfb@outlook.com (Members cannot create posts directly on our page, but you can comment on any existing posts, including sharing photos). Many thanks to Paul and to all those who have taken on vacant posts, these are now all filled.

Contacting Group Officials

It would be appreciated if Members could ensure they contact the correct officer re any EBEG matters. In particular, Richard Delahoy is now ONLY dealing with membership, finances and EBM Extra. So contact him for changes of address, new e-mail addresses, subscription renewals and EBM Extra content and sponsorship. For matters such as lost or damaged EBMs, sales, meetings, EBM content, etc., please contact the relevant officer, details are on page 2.

Second Class Post Deliveries

From 28 July 2025 (the day after EBM 736 went to print) the days of delivery of second class post started to be reduced. In future, there will be no more Saturday deliveries. On other days, there will be a fortnightly cycle - deliveries on Monday, Wednesday and Friday one week and on Tuesday and Thursday the next. Apologies to anyone who receives EBM later than before, but this is obviously outside of our control. Pdf copies of EBM will still be sent out on the day of publication (the Friday after the Sunday it goes to print).

EBM Extra 9

The next issue of EBM Extra will be published towards the end of September and sent to all members by the usual distribution methods. This issue has been funded from the sale of items left to the Group by four enthusiasts, as explained in it.

Coverage is varied as ever. The front cover and an extensive photo feature recall Viceroy of Saffron Walden and their very varied fleet. Looking back to 1986, we remember the short-lived X99 Forester service from Harlow to Basildon, whilst a decade earlier, Richard Delahoy explains how he came to drive for Southend Transport on their special Boxing Day buses.

There are features on Shiny New Lodekkas, buses in unusual guises, a look at a Benfleet / Canvey & District destination blind and a KSW in Holland. To conclude, we start a new series “The Lost Names of Deregulation” and look at buses demonstrated to Southend Transport from the 1960s onwards.



For Sale

Two Sun Star 1:24 Routemaster bus models, comprising model 2902, RM254 in LT red on route 272, and model 2904, RMC1453, Green Line Coach, blinded up for route 715. Both boxed and in near mint condition (but RM254 has a broken offside driver’s mirror). £100 each, collect from Southend or local delivery may be possible. Please e-mail or contact Richard Delahoy if interested, richard.delahoy@blueyonder.co.uk

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Below: A traffic notice from June 1957.


EASTERN NATIONAL

ESSEX SHOW, SAFFRON WALDEN, 12th & 13th JUNE, 1957

SPECIAL LOCAL SERVICES
TO AND FROM THE SHOW GROUND

SERVICE 301.
BISHOP'S STORTFORD
E.N. Office, depart: 10.0 a.m., 12.15, 1.5, 3.15, 4.15, 5.15 p.m.
The SHOW GROUND depart: 10.50 a.m., 1.15, 1.55, 4.5, 5.5, 6.5 p.m.

SERVICE 304.
ELSENHAM
The Crown depart: 9.15 a.m.
THE SHOW GROUND depart: 4.15 p.m.

SERVICE 307.
CLAVERING
Princess of Wales depart: 10.45 a.m.
THE SHOW GROUND depart: 5.45 p.m.

SERVICE 308.
LANGLEY LOWER GREEN
Black Bull depart: 10.30 a.m.
THE SHOW GROUND depart: 5.45 p.m.

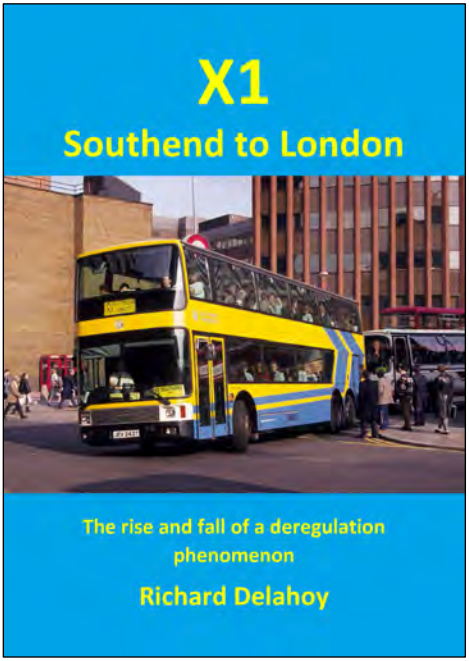
THESE SERVICES WILL PICK UP AND SET DOWN PASSENGERS AT ALL RECOGNISED BUS STOPPING PLACES ON ROUTE

Head Offices: New Writtle Street, Chelmsford. 'Phone 3431 (4 lines)

Book Review

Paul Harvey

‘X1 Southend to London - The rise and fall of a deregulation phenomenon’ by Richard Delahoy



The publication of Group member Richard Delahoy’s book consisting of 120,000 words over 284 pages explains the history of the X1 group of services from 1980 between Southend and London, operated by Southend Transport under the 1980 Transport Act. The book is well produced using lots of research material, comprising of Richard’s own records and observations, official documentation where available and interviews with senior managers, interested personnel and passengers.

The service started as a joint operation with Reading Transport, to and from Reading via London and Heathrow Airport, but that agreement ceased in 1982 and the service then ran from Southend to London and Heathrow Airport. From a passenger’s view the service was a success, with frequencies being increased at regular intervals. Rail strikes and poor reliability of the Fenchurch Street line provided additional users. From inside, organisational problems were developing over time with an unsustainable expansion in operations to a fleet of 70 coaches, eventually resulting in major cutbacks in 1987. Later, in 1992, competition started from Badgerline owned Thamesway (later First owned Essex Buses) as City Saver. The service was rebranded as Green Line in 1995 and this continued when joint operation with Essex Buses started in October 1999. However, two years later Essex Buses withdrew from the service completely and a couple of months later the service, now under Arriva, ceased altogether in February 2002 because of poor profitability in a declining market as rail provision improved.

Coverage is also recorded in the book of other services between Southend and London by Eastern National and National Express at the time via different routings, plus other coach operators who attempted to operate a service to London. Green Line provided a service from Tilbury and Grays to London which wasn’t really a direct threat to the X1. There is a full chapter covering Stephensons replacement service X1 once Arriva withdrew from the service. Stephensons finally pulled the plug on the service in 2008; the book then explains how three other small operators tried their hands until finally giving up in 2016.

This hard cover book comprises plenty of colour photographs of the coaches used, to supplement the text, contained in 24 chapters and 15 appendixes. A good selection of timetable leaflets, examples of various ticketing and marketing materials are included and the book is fully indexed.

Various questions are asked, such as “Was the service sustainable?”, “Was the network and level of service in 1986/1987 Britain’s most intensive coach service requiring over 60 coaches and operating every 5 minutes in peak periods?”.

A nice touch is the book has been written as a tribute to Derek Giles, Traffic Superintendent at Southend Transport who mastermind the whole service and its (ultimately unsustainable) expansion, until his fall from favour as the author explains in the book.

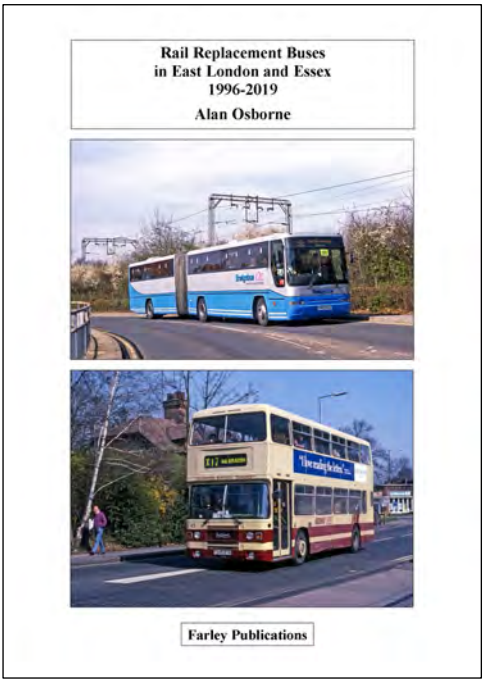
A recommended book to add to your bookshelf for £30. EBEG members can buy copies post free from Richard at https://signal-training.com/X1book/EBEG/. Copies are also available at Group meetings at a discounted price.

New Book

Rail Replacement Buses in East London and Essex 1996-2019 by **Alan Osborne**

84 pages plus covers, A4, softback.
Amongst the major rail replacements covered in the book are the 2003 Chancery Lane Central line derailment, the 2004 Ipswich Tunnel closure and the many replacement services required during the Crossrail (now Elizabeth line) construction, as well as more routine maintenance closures. A very large selection of operators, vehicle types and liveries are featured.

To purchase the book, POST FREE, payment can be made either by bank transfer or cheque. If the former, you should pay **£20** to the same account as used for EBEG subscriptions (Santander Business, 09-06-66, 42118196, "Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group (EBEG)") and also e-mail Owen Woodliffe, owen_woodliffe@hotmail.com, with a note of your address. If paying by cheque, please make it payable to "Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group (EBEG)" and post it to Owen, address on page 2. Copies will also be available at Group meetings and from the Group stall at events.



Right: Cover. **Opposite**: A sample page.
Below: A photo included in the book, Essex Buses (Thamesway) Bristol VR / ECW 3113 (XHK 218X) in Kirkdale Road, Leytonstone in 1999.





Y817 TGH Go-Coach 2016

The sun also shone in Cambridge Road, Barking when this vehicle in the striking purple and yellow livery of Go-Coach, Otford was captured on District line RRBS route A. A Plaxton bodied Volvo B7TL that was new to London Central, PVL217, in 2001.



LLU 670 London Bus Co. 2016

I saved the best till last. To conclude our look at the District line RRBS, we see fully restored London Bus Company RT3871, a Park Royal bodied AEC Regent III new in 1950, which makes a fine sight some 66 years later. Working all the way through to Tower Hill, with the A indicator appropriately housed under the canopy just below the blind box.

EAST LONDON LINE



C372 CAS Capital Citybus 1996

The East London line was originally part of the Metropolitan line and was coloured purple on the tube map. It became orange in 1990. The line was closed entirely between March 1995 and March 1998 for major maintenance and refurbishment works. RRBS route ELX was introduced between Aldgate and New Cross via Tower Bridge. Buses used on the service were painted in this special livery of orange and white. Capital Citybus 172, a 1986 Leyland Olympian ONLXB with Alexander bodywork new to Highland Scottish Omnibuses, F372, is seen in Aldgate bus station.

737 for EBM 737

Essex Buses / Eastern Counties Connections



Right: Last month in '736 for EBM 736' we noted that Dennis Dart SLF / Plaxton Pointer 2 736 was new in October 1998, but passed immediately on loan to First Eastern Counties. All of 732-738 (S732-8 TWC) did the same, returning to Essex Buses (732-3 to Eastern National at Chelmsford, the rest to Thamesway at Basildon) in February 1999 (734 in January). Here is **737** (S**737** TWC) when with First Eastern Counties as their 2008, at Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station on 2 January 1999. They were on loan to convert services 74/75/76, Ipswich - Felixstowe, to low floor operation pending delivery of new Scania L94UB / Wrightbus Solar buses for these services.

Below: Essex Buses t/a Eastern National 1517 (K**737** JAH) Dennis Lance / Northern Counties Paladin B49F was new to Eastern Counties in 1993. It is seen leaving Chelmsford Bus Station on route 31 on 25 April 2000. In Eastern National version of Anglia livery, with route branding for services 31 / 31X Chelmsford - Maldon - Burnham-on-Crouch.
Both **Robert Appleton**



Service Revisions

Ian Ransom

Of note is that **Konectbuses** are introducing a new network on their former Chambers services around Braintree, Colchester and Suffolk, with services renumbered and new connections, and, as reported last month, some services enhanced with funding from the UK Government BSIP via Suffolk County Council.

21 June 2025

498 (Daily) Romford Queens Hospital - Brentwood Sainsburys **Stagecoach London**. Revised timetable for duration of the replacement of Gallows Corner flyover, operates every 22 minutes M-S daytime and every 32/33 minutes evening and Su.

23 July - 31 August

73/A/B (M-S) Chelmsford - Maldon **First Essex**. Whilst we don't normally cover routine diversions, due to the closure of Langford Road this service was diverted via Witham Road (B1018), Langford Road, Maldon Road, Blue Mills Hill, Witham Road, The Street and Maypole Road, with a revised timetable for the duration of the diversion.

27 July

31/331 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Burnham-on-Crouch Clock Tower **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F, with timetable variations on schooldays and non-schooldays.

87 (Daily) Great Horkesley, Malvern Way - Brightlingsea, Victoria Place **First Essex**. Further to last month, Nsch reduced from x20 to x30, remains largely x20 on schooldays (but see further revision on 31 August below).

724 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Heathrow Airport Central Bus Station **Arriva**. To correct EBM 736, the Su Watford Junction - Heathrow Airport CBS journeys were transferred to service **725**, not renumbered (on M-S this service operates Stevenage Bus Station - Heathrow Airport CBS).

28 July

10 (**M-S**) St Osyth Beach - Clacton Shopping Centre **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE. Operates hourly between 27 July and 30 August. To correct last month, operates M-S NOT daily.

29 August

70 (M-F) Colchester Bus Station - Marks Tey, Domsey Bank **Konectbuses**. Withdrawn after operation on this date (corrects EBM 736).

31 August

2A (M-S) Southend Travel Centre - Shoeburyness East Beach **Arriva**. NEW SERVICE with funding from the UK Government Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) via Southend-on-Sea City Council. Two late night services at 2315 and 0015 from Southend Travel Centre.

6 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Southend, Garon Park **Arriva**. Additional M-S services added with funding from the UK Government BSIP via Southend-on-Sea City Council. Ex Southend at 1935, 2035 and 2135 and ex Garon Park at 2005, 2105 and 2205.

9 (M-S) Basildon Bus Station - Brentwood Railway Station **First Essex**. Minor timetable changes. The 1415 ex Basildon and 1545 ex Brentwood that had been withdrawn during school holidays have not been reinstated at the start of the new school year.

9/A (Daily) Rayleigh Railway Station - Shoeburyness East Beach (**9**) /Great Wakering, Landwick Cottages (**9A**) **Arriva**. Saturday service reduced from every 15 minutes (alternate **9/9A**) to every 20 minutes (alternate **9/9A**) therefore even clockface departures no longer applies.

21 (Daily) Canvey Newlands, Creek Road - Great Wakering, Landwick Cottages **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-S, operates generally hourly, with additional school day journeys. Rerouted via Woodgrange Drive and Thorpe Bay Railway Station, then after Great Wakering Church rerouted to terminate at Shoeburyness East Beach, rather than Landwick Cottages.

23/A/B (Daily) Leigh Railway Station - Southend Airport (**23A**) / Aviation Way Business Park (**23B**) **Stephensons**. NEW SERVICE with funding from the UK Government BSIP via Southend-on-Sea City Council. On M-F, alternate

journeys operate as **23A/B** via Elmsleigh Drive, Belfairs, Eastwood to Comet Way, where it splits with **23A** operating via St Laurence Way to terminate at Southend Airport and **23B** loops via Cherry Orchard Way and Aviation Way. First **23B** departs Leigh at 0550, then 0748, 0848 then 0945 hourly to 1445, then 1555, 1700, 1815. **23A** at 0648, 0805 0915 hourly to 1515, 1620, 1740, 1835 then 1925 and 1950 (last two terminate at Comet Way).
There is one journey numbered **23** at 1708 from Southend Airport which operates via A127 between Warners Bridge and Eastwood Road North. On S, operates every 30 minutes as **23A** from 0755 to 1725 then 1825. On Su operates as a **23A** every 90 minutes from 1030 to 1630. (Proposals for this route were outlined on page 7 of EBM 732.)
25 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Southend Travel Centre **First Essex**. Minor timetable changes, with a number of poorly used journeys withdrawn.
26 (M-S) Shoeburyness East Beach - Hadleigh Bus Depot / Canvey Newlands, Creek Road **First Essex**. Revised to operate hourly between Shoeburyness East Beach and Southend Travel Centre, via Woodgrange Drive, Lifstan Way, Bournes Green Chase, North Shoebury Road, Maplin Way North and Campfield Road. The short journeys between East Beach and Shoeburyness Asda are withdrawn.
27/27A/827 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Canvey, Leigh Beck **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions on S evenings and to the school day 827.
28 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Basildon Bus Station **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions. The 2325 ex Southend on M-F withdrawn between Hadleigh, The Memorial and Basildon Bus Station.
37 (Daily) Warley Eagle Way - Bishops Hall Estate **First Essex**. M-S service withdrawn (see **Central Connect 60** for a part replacement service from 1 September). The ECC funded **37** operated by **First Essex** on Sundays is unchanged.
51 (Daily) Highwoods Square - Wivenhoe Railway Station **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions.
52 (Daily) Highwoods Square - Stanway Sainsburys **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions.
54 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Greenstead Library **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions.
55 (Daily) Colchester, Angel Court - Monkwick, Gosfield Road **First Essex**. The current M-S service between Colchester and Monkwick withdrawn, the Sunday **55** service will continue to operate every 30 minutes.
55A (M-S) Colchester, Angel Court - West Mersea High Street **First Essex.** Revised to operate to & from Colchester Bus Station to West Mersea High Street and renumbered **55**.
56 (Daily) Colchester City Centre - Shrub End, Hazell Avenue **First Essex**. Journeys from Shrub End extended from High Street to Colchester Bus Station.
57 (Daily) Colchester City Centre - St Michaels, Baronswood Way **First Essex**. Journeys from St Michaels extended from High Street to Colchester Bus Station.
68/A (Daily) Highwoods Tesco - West Mersea High Street **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions on **68**, 1850 ex Highwoods withdrawn, replaced by a 1907 **55** commencing from Colchester Bus Station. No change to Su **68A**.
70/170 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Braintree, Marks Farm Tesco **First Essex**. Revised timetable on M-F.
71/71X/371 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Colchester Bus Station **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions on M-S.
87 (Daily) Great Horkesley, Malvern Way - Brightlingsea, Victoria Place **First Essex**. Revised timetable, with the M-F school day service reduced from x20 to x30 between 1000 and 1300.
102/4 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Harwich Bus Station **First Essex**. On M-F, the 1655 and 1725 service **104** ex Colchester withdrawn and replaced by a journey at 1710, with minor timetable revisions to other journeys.
320 (M-F) Colchester Railway Station - Great Notley, Bakers Lane **First Essex**. The 1440 (Sch only) and 1735 journeys from Colchester withdrawn.
331/332 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Burnham-on-Crouch Clock Tower **First Essex**. Additional journeys with funding from the UK Government BSIP via Essex County Council ('Love Your Bus') on M-F. 0525 and 0705 ex Chelmsford (both **331**) and 0830 (**331**) 1830, 1935 (both **332**) ex Burnham.
351 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Warley, Eagle Way **First Essex**. Additional journeys with funding from the UK Government BSIP via Essex County Council ('Love Your Bus') on M-F. 0935, 1135 and 1335 ex Chelmsford, 1035, 1235 and 1435 ex Warley.
625 (Sch Only) Chelmsford, Wood Street Tesco - Southend High School for Boys **First Essex**. Minor timetable revision and rerouted via Eastwood Kent Elms, no longer serves Progress Road.
725 (Sch Only) Basildon Bus Station - Southend High School for Boys **First Essex**. Service withdrawn. (So last day of operation was last day of summer term.)
C2 (Daily) Chelmsford Bus Station - Broomfield Hospital **First Essex**. Minor timetable revisions to M-F evening services.
O4/O6 (Sch) **First Eastern Counties** will be operating new college services to the Suffolk One Sixth Form College, Ipswich, those partly within Essex are **O4** Colchester, Stanway and **O6** Harwich, to the College.

X10 (Daily) Basildon Bus Station - Stansted Airport Coach Station **First Essex**. M-F morning journeys from Basildon retimed to depart earlier to improve punctuality.
X20 (Daily) Colchester Railway Station - Stansted Airport Coach Station **First Essex**. On M-F, the 0835 ex Stansted revised to terminate at Colchester Bus Station at 1028. The 1033 from the Railway Station revised to commence from Colchester High Street at 1040.
X30 (Daily) Southend Travel Centre - Stansted Airport Coach Station **First Essex**. Additional stop introduced in both directions in Rayleigh, London Road (called Electricity Board, stops are located near Leonard Drive). No change to the timetable.

1 September
5 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Harlow, Sumners Farm **Central Connect**. On Saturdays, the 0730, 0755 and 0825 ex Harlow and 0740, 0805 ex Sumners Farm withdrawn due to low usage. Additional journey at 2245 ex Harlow introduced. No change on M-F or Su.
8 (M-S) Rettendon Common, Central Connect Depot - Wickford Railway Station **Central Connect**. As a result of changes to service **12** (see below), the following changes are made to service **8**. On M-F, 0610 ex Rettendon revised to depart at 0605 and 1853 ex Wickford Swan is withdrawn. On Saturdays, the 1853 ex Wickford Swan revised to start from Wickford Railway Station at 1852.
12 (M-S) Billericay, Arlington Way - Wickford Swan **Central Connect**. Revised timetable introduced to improve punctuality. The Saturday timetable now has different early morning and late afternoon departure times to the M-F timetable.
13/A/B/C (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - North Weald, The Talbot **Central Connect**. Revised timetable introduced on all days. Certain early morning and mid evening journeys rerouted via Farm Hill Road and Shernbroke Road, Waltham Abbey as **13A**. Some M-S early morning and late evening journeys extended from North Weald, The Talbot to & from Ongar, Two Brewers as **13C**. Service **13B** retained and is for those services that operate between Waltham Cross and Epping Station (additional information to last month).
14 (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Upshire Shops **Central Connect**. Revised timetable on all days, with a number of M-F journeys withdrawn and replaced by additional journeys on **13/A, 15B** and **16**.
15/A/B (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Harlow Bus Station **Central Connect**. Revised timetable on all days. On M-F, the 0848 ex Upshire will now start from Harlow Bus Station at 0815. In addition, a revised morning and afternoon peak timetable will apply. The 1715 ex Waltham Cross renumbered from **15A** to **15** and no longer serves Katherines in Harlow. On Saturdays, the timetable is revised to provide a closer match with the M-F service.
16 (M-S) Waltham Cross Bus Station - Waltham Abbey, Shernbroke Road circular **Central Connect**. On M-F, revised timetable with some morning / afternoon peak journeys revised to terminate at Maynard Court and restart from Honey Lane to improve punctuality. On Saturdays, reduced from every 30 to every 40 minutes due to traffic congestion. The Sunday **16C** is unchanged.
18/A/C (Daily) Ongar, Two Brewers / Epping Station - Loughton Station **Central Connect**. M-S morning service numbered **18A** that starts from Epping Station revised to start from North Weald, The Talbot. Minor timetable revisions introduced on M-S. No change to Sunday service.
20/21/22 (Daily) Harlow Bus Station - Ongar, Two Brewers **Central Connect**. Revised timetable introduced on M-S, with additional running time on M-F peak journeys. Some additional short journeys between Epping Station and North Weald, The Talbot (numbered **22**) on M-F. On Saturdays, the 0605 **20** ex Ongar revised to start from Epping Station at 0630 and a revised evening service, the 2342 **22B** ex Harlow is withdrawn.
24 (M-S) Southend Travel Centre - Southchurch, Whittingham Avenue **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
25/B (M-S) Harlow Bus Station - Cheshunt, Brookfield Centre **Central Connect**. Revised timetable to improve punctuality. On M-F morning peak, additional journeys introduced towards Harlow to enhance the frequency from x60 to x40, while the 1750 (S), 1752 (M-F) Hoddesdon Sainsburys to Harlow Bus Station is withdrawn. Operationally, due to low loadings, converted from double deck to single deck operation.
26 (M-F) Harlow Bus Station - Little Parndon circular **Central Connect**. Revised timetable, with additional journeys from Harlow Bus Station at 0735, 1605 and 2050 (to Hornbeams). No change to Sunday **26A**.
42 (Daily) Braintree Freeport Railway Station - Bury St Edmunds Bus Station **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE via Halstead, Sible Hedingham, Castle Hedingham, Sudbury, Long Melford and Sicklesmere. Replaces the current **89** between Braintree and Halstead. On Sundays, only operates between Sudbury Bus Station and Bury St Edmunds Bus Station.
43 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Bury St Edmunds Bus Station **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE via Great Horkesley, Nayland Doctors Surgery, Stoke-by-Nayland, Sudbury, Long Melford, Lavenham and Sicklesmere, hourly M-S daytime.

43A (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Bury St Edmunds Bus Station **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE via Great Horkesley, Nayland Bear Street, Assington, Sudbury, Long Melford, Lavenham and Sicklesmere, hourly M-S daytime.
43B (M-F) Colchester Norman Way Schools / Bus Station - Bury St Edmunds Bus Station **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE via Great Horkesley, Nayland Doctors Surgery, Assington, Sudbury, Long Melford, Lavenham and Sicklesmere. One morning journey from Sudbury to Colchester extended to Norman Way Schools, one afternoon journey from Bury St Edmunds to Colchester Bus Station. Two afternoon journeys from Colchester Bus Station to Bury St Edmunds.
X43 (Daily) Colchester Bus Station - Bury St Edmunds Bus Station **Konectbuses**. NEW SERVICE via Great Horkesley, Sudbury, Long Melford, Lavenham and Sicklesmere, limited journeys on M-S, four journeys to & from Colchester on Sundays. Note, the **42** and **43** group are partial, but not exact, replacements, for **84**, **750**, **753** and **784**. For example, the **750** was mainly Bury St Edmunds - Sudbury, the extension to Braintree is new. Also, the new routes serve some different villages to the old ones.
44 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station (one morning journey M-F toward Colchester, starts from Great Waldingfield, White Hart, another from Long Melford, Bull Farm Lane) **Konectbuses**. Route **754** renumbered via West Bergholt Treble Tile, Wormingford, Bures, Great Cornard.
44A (Sch Only) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station (morning journey starts from Long Melford, Bull Farm Lane) **Konectbuses**. Via West Bergholt Queens Head, Wormingford, Bures, Great Cornard. Route **756** renumbered.
60 (M-S) Warley Eagle Way - Bishops Hall Estate **Central Connect** NEW SERVICE. Operates about every 60 minutes 0640 - 1900 (M-F), 0735 - 1735 (S). This provides a part replacement for **First Essex 37**.
84 Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury **Konectbuses**. Withdrawn and replaced by **43/A/B/X43**.
89 (M-S) Braintree Railway Station - Great Yeldham, The Green **Konectbuses**. Revised to operate between Halstead, Conies Road and Great Yeldham, The Green (see also service **42**) with a revised timetable. Five journeys from Great Yeldham on M-F Sch, four Nsch, with four journeys M-F from Halstead. On Saturdays, two journeys from Great Yeldham and only one from Halstead.
92 (M-S) Ipswich Old Cattle Market Bus Station - Manningtree, Bendalls Court **Ipswich Buses**. Additional M-F journey at 0649 from Brantham Bull - Manningtree, Bendalls Court. Rerouted in Ipswich via Wherstead Road and no longer serves Sinclair Drive.
331 (Sch only) Braintree, Kings Park Village - Great Dunmow, Helena Romanes School **Central Connect**. NEW SERVICE. One journey each way 0745 ex Kings Park and 1530 ex Helena Romanes. (Partly replaces **Flagfinders 827** & **828** which are closed contracts.)
333 (Daily) Braintree Bus Interchange - Stansted Airport Coach Station **Central Connect**. Minor timetable changes to improve reliability. On M-F, the 0740 ex Braintree and 1515 ex Stansted are diverted to serve Helena Romanes School (partly replaces **Flagfinders 827** & **828** which are closed contracts). Operationally, converted from single deck to double deck, although overnight journeys will likely still be single deck.
608 Gidea Park, Gallows Corner - Shenfield High School **Go Ahead London**. Revised timetable in line with revised school opening times.
754 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station **Konectbuses**. Via West Bergholt (Treble Tile), Wormingford, Bures, Great Cornard, route renumbered **44**.
756 (Sch Only) Colchester Norman Way Schools - Sudbury Bus Station **Konectbuses**. Withdrawn and replaced by **44A**.
784 (M-S) Colchester Bus Station - Sudbury Bus Station **Konectbuses**. Withdrawn and replaced by **43/A/B/X43**.

2 September
51 (Sch Only) Chafford Hundred Railway Station **-** Southend High School for Boys **NIBS**. Minor timetable revision to the afternoon journey.
100 (Sch Only) Stow Maries, The Prince of Wales - Burnham-on-Crouch, Ormiston Rivers Academy **Fords Coaches**. Service withdrawn following loss of ECC contract. (So last day of operation was last day of summer term.)
417 (Sch Only) Rayne, The Welsh Princess - Newport JF Academy **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
446 (Sch Only) Manuden Bentfield Bury Road - Saffron Walden High School **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable introduced, no longer serves Brent Pelham.
806/807/808/810/811/812/813 (Sch Only) School buses to & from Rochford, King Edmund School **Stephensons**. Revised timetables, with **813** from Little Wakering Barrow Hall Road withdrawn. (So last day of operation of **813** was last day of summer term.)
815 (Sch Only) Rochford, Roche Avenue - Westcliff, St Bernards School **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable. The afternoon journey will now start earlier and serve St Bernards School before Westcliff High Schools.
816 (Sch Only) Ashingdon, Lascelles Gardens - Westcliff, St Bernards School **Stephensons**. Revised route and

timetable. The afternoon journey will now start earlier and serve St Bernards School before Westcliff High Schools.
817 (Sch Only) Southchurch, Cokefield Avenue - Westcliff High Schools **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.

3 September
44 (Daily) Lakeside Bus Station - Grays Bus Station **Ensignbus**. Revised timetable for school day only journeys.
73 (Daily) Lakeside Bus Station - Tilbury Asda **Ensignbus**. The 1620 Palmers College - Lakeside (Sch Only) withdrawn on Fridays.
491 (Sch Only) North Weald, The Talbot - Epping School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
492 (Sch Only) North Weald, The Kings Head - Epping School **Stephensons**. Revised timetable.
493 (Sch Only) Fyfield, Roding Close - Epping School **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable, will now operate via Toot Hill.

8 September
347 (Tu, Th Only) Hatfield Broad Oak Barnfield - Harlow Bus Station **Epping Forest Community Transport**. Fixed timetable withdrawn and replaced with a flexible (pre booking required) service.

20 September
721 (S, Su, BH Only) Braintree Railway Station - Great Yeldham, Zero 2 Bus Museum **Great Yeldham Buses**. Operates in conjunction with open days until 26 October (subject to museum being open).

Further to last month, the new Sunday service Sudbury - Hadleigh - Ipswich is to be operated by **Konectbuses**, route number **50**, from 31 August. From the next day, the existing M-S route **90**, Sudbury - Hadleigh, is renumbered **50**, with an enhanced service.

Details of other new Konectbuses services outside Essex are in the Konectbuses article in this issue.

With thanks to Paul Harvey and Omnibus Society

Local Bus Consultation

Essex County Council are reviewing their support of 41 local bus services and are inviting feedback.
There are far too many to include here, but further details are available via ECC or by using the link below.
https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/iptu/localbus2025/consult_view/

Below: Leaflet for the LeighLink. The timetable for routes 23/A/B is on the reverse.



Colchester

Transfers In & Out

Enviro 200s 4049 (GN09 AXA) and 4055 (GN09 AXH), both in old turquoise 'cow horns' livery, were collected from Northfleet on Saturday 16 August and entered service at Colchester the following week.

At the same time, Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3881 (KX11 PZY) was dropped off at Northfleet. Whether it will get used again is not certain as its MOT is running out and apparently it needs a lot spent on it. It was only received by Colchester from Harlow on 27 June 2025, as reported and illustrated in last month's EBM. It last ran in service at Colchester on route 8 on 13 August.

Following the withdrawal of Enviro 300 3552 (KX09 GYB) on 22 July as reported last month, VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 4471 (MX61 AXN) was collected from Southend on 26th to replace it. 3552 has now moved (August) to Southend for onward disposal.

Further to last month, when it was reported that Enviro 200 3985 (GN07 DLK) was withdrawn from service in June 2025, it ran for a single day at Northfleet on 14 July, then returned to Colchester. It then also moved to Southend in August for onward disposal.

Harlow

Acquired Vehicles

4138, YW68 PFF, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to LandFlight, Solihull February 2019
4139, YW68 PFJ, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to LandFlight, Solihull February 2019
4140, YW68 PFK, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B41F, new to LandFlight, Solihull February 2019

Acquired from LandFlight June 2025 (first noted at Harlow depot on 27th). They have dark blue based moquette seats, 4140 at least has seatbelts.

4140 entered service on 9 August and 4138 on 18th. Both remain in all white LandFlight livery, but with their fleet names removed and an Arriva one added on the front dash. 4139 was repainted into fleet livery before entering service on 27th.

4141, YX68 ULR, ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B30F, new to Falcon Coaches, Byfleet September 2019

Acquired August 2025. Repainted into Arriva livery before entering service on 27 August.

Fleet number wise, 4138-4141 follow on from the acquisitions of 4135 and 4136 reported in EBM 734, although, at present, there is not a 4137. Incidentally, YW68 PFA/PFE/PFG, from the same batch as 4138-4140, are in service with Ipswich Buses, as reported and illustrated (PFE) in last month's EBM.

Transfer In

Mercedes-Benz Citaro Driver Trainer T019 (BD12 DJF), from Hemel Hempstead, c May 2025. It is in normal light blue livery at rear, purple at front, white and grey dividing lines. New in July 2012 (in Arriva turquoise cow horns livery) with fleet number 3019.

Withdrawn Vehicles / Transfers Out

In EBM 731 we reported that Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 3820 (GN07 AVG) was withdrawn from service (it last ran on 21 January 2025). It was towed away for scrap on 7 August.

Similar 3882 (KX11 PVD), last used 11 August, and 3889 (BG59 FWP), last used 11 July, have been moved to the area of the depot yard normally reserved for withdrawn vehicles. These are the last two of the type at Harlow.

Last month we reported that Optare Solo 1467 (KE55 KTC) had been withdrawn (it last ran on 26 April this year). It has been towed to Southend (in August) for onward disposal.

Also moving to Southend in August was Optare Versa 4232 (KX62 JWG), also for onward disposal.



Above: Newly acquired Enviro 200 MMC 4140 (YW68 PFK) is seen on route 59 entering Chelmsford Bus Station, already blinded for its return journey, on 15 August 2025. **David Moth**

Other Vehicle News
21 year old Solo 1457 (KE04 PZF) has received a new white front destination display, replacing orange, presumably after a failure of the latter. It seems to be of a slightly reduced aperture.

StreetLite 1660 (GN64 DXX) has been fitted with audio and visual next stop announcements.

Southend

Transfers In & Out
3552 and 3985 from Colchester as reported above, for disposal.
1467 and 4232 from Harlow as reported above, for disposal.
Further to last month, Optare Versas 4214 (from Ware) and 4237 (from Harlow) are for disposal.

In EBM 731 we reported that Southend used Ware's Versa 2405 (YJ58 PFX) briefly for a couple of days at the beginning of February 2025, before it went back to Ware on 7 February and was in use there later that day. It is now back at Southend but hasn't been used in service (it was last used at Ware on 9 June).

4471 to Colchester as reported above.

VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Geminis 6302 and 6304 (LJ11 AED/F) from Arriva Kent & Surrey (Tunbridge Wells) also for disposal. 22 vehicles are currently stored at Southend for disposal. The list is 1002/9/10/1/2, 1467, 2401, 3012/3/5/20/5, 3552, 3985, 4038/52, 4182, 4208/14/37, 4703, 6302/4. Most of these have come from depots in the South East, but 4703, for example, is an ex Arriva North West Mercedes-Benz Sprinter / Mellor Strata (LM17 WLU).

With thanks to John Card, Nicholas King, John Podgorski, Keith Sadler, Steve Thompson, Owen Woodliffe, Bus Lists on the Web, Harlowride and LOTS.

New Vehicles
65149 (YB25 VXJ), 65154 (YB25 VXK), 65164 (YB25 VXL), B39F, 08/25

Yutong E12 single-deckers imported from China to the UK by Pelican Bus & Coach who do finishing work on the vehicles. These were delivered to Basildon Depot on 18 August 2025 for type training. They are in new corporate livery, yet to receive decals. And so a new era of electric vehicles for First Essex begins. Further details next month.

Acquired Vehicles

33805	YX63 LJK	SFD4DSBRFDGX37468	D419/3	H41/26F	09/13	First Eastern Counties
33811	YX63 LJY	SFD4DSBRFDGX37484	D419/9	H41/26F	09/13	First Eastern Counties

E40D / Enviro 400. Acquired from First Eastern Counties (Great Yarmouth) on 14 August 2025 (33805), circa 19th (33811, seen at Mardens that day).
They had been in FEC 'Coastlink' yellow and two tone blue livery (in Urban 2 style) but are being repainted before entering service with First Essex. They had been new for FEC Excel services and are to high spec, with enhanced seats upstairs (fewer seats than normal for E40D / Enviro 400s, Essex's existing ones are H45/30F) and improved destination displays. Photos of 33811 at Mardens are on page 20.

Vehicles on Loan
Details of 36184 and 33981, with a photo of the former, are on the inside front cover.

Allocation Changes
BN-Basildon; CF-Chelmsford; CR-Colchester; HH-Hadleigh; DS-Driving School; FG-First Group cascade (to / from another First company); oos-out of service.

Period 5 2025/26 (27 July - 23 August)
33504 BN-BN (oos), 33551 BN-BN (oos), 33552 BN-BN (oos), 33674 CR-CR (oos), 33805 FG-CF (oos), 33811 FG-CF (oos), 33985 BN-BN (oos), 33995 CF-CF (oos), 34465 HH-HH (oos), 37037 CR (oos)-Disposal, 37054 CR (oos)-Disposal, 47645 HH-FG, 47665 CR-CR (oos), 67779 CF-CF (oos)

33504, 33551 and 33552 are withdrawn from service awaiting disposal.

Disposals
14 August 2025: 47645 to First Eastern Counties at Lowestoft.
18 August: 37037 and 37054 towed away from Quayside Depot, Colchester (not known where to).

Further to EBM 735, it is confirmed that 44915 and 69433 went to PVS, Barnsley, for scrap.

Repaints
Previously repainted 63463 (see EBM 733) has now lost Essex Bus branding and received full First Bus vinyls. More details on inside rear cover, with photos on rear cover.
Further to previous reports, one other previously repainted vehicle to have old style fleet names and logos replaced with new style ones is 33713 (between early May and early July 2025).
Additionally, the following which did not previously have vinyls, have had them added: 33750 (between 7 and 31 July 2025), see photo on page 19; 47525 (between late June and late July); 63064 in July (this had still had Essex Bus fleet names on front windscreen and rear windows and contactless wording on cove panels, all now removed). The two StreetLites have had black masking added to the bottom of the windscreen to accommodate the f symbol.

Around the Depots
(All vehicles listed below allocated to relevant depot except where stated. All dates August 2025 except where stated.)

Colchester
Colchester Road in Lawford is closed from 28 July to 11 September 2025 whilst Cadent replace gas mains pipes.

Therefore routes 102 / 104 (Harwich - Colchester) are diverted from Manningtree, Skinners Arms, to Lawford Place via Station Road, Manningtree and Coxs Hill, Lawford. This is the old Colchester - Harwich 70 route, before it was diverted to use Colchester Road, Lawford in the late 1960s.

Along Station Road, Manningtree, is a curved railway bridge, where the Harwich Town - Manningtree railway line crosses the road. The safe height clearance is 15 feet, but to use this, double-deckers have to use the centre of the road. Ipswich Buses Scania double-deckers on Manningtree - Ipswich 92 do this six days per week. However, First Essex are taking no chances, so since 28 July routes 102 / 104 have been almost 100% single deck operated, using a mixture of 37/41 seater StreetLites and 44 seater Volvo B7RLEs. During the school holidays this should not cause any capacity issues, but possibly may after the start of the Autumn Term. The one exception recorded was on 21 August when Enviro 400 33693 worked 0935 Colchester - Harwich 104 & 1110 return. But 33693 did not follow the diversion route. Instead, from Lawford Place to Mistley Towers it went via Long Road, Lawford and New Road, Mistley so it did not have to negotiate the railway bridge in Station Road, Manningtree, but the route it took meant that it did not serve Manningtree at all!

Below: Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Urban 2 69515 (BJ11 ECN) is seen passing under the bridge on 1440 Colchester - Harwich 104 on 28 August. Note the road markings for vehicles to use the centre of the road under the bridge. **Robert Appleton**



Basildon

Enviro 400 MMC 33988 has received a super rear advert for USP College.

Enviro 400 33750 was on loan from Hadleigh 23-25 August inclusive, used on 25 and 300.

44001 on 251 (25th, Bank Holiday Monday) & 31st.

Further to last month, First West of England StreetDecks 35671 (MF22 SXZ), 35672 (MF22 SYA), 35673 (MF22 SYC) and

35675 (MF22 SYG) have now all been repainted at Mardens and have moved from storage at Basildon to Great Yarmouth (replacing some Enviro 400s moving to Essex, see 'Acquired Vehicles' above).

The section of Southernhay between Market Pavement and Clay Hill Road is closed in both directions from Monday 28 July until Sunday 30 November 2025. However, buses can still access the bus station (and the taxi rank in front of the bus station is still in use). All westbound services travelling towards Basildon Bus Station will divert via Clay Hill Road, Cherrydown East and Station Way. Routes affected are 9, 22, 25, 28, 100, 200, 201, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, X10 and South Essex school routes. More on this next month.

Chelmsford
69278, the Volvo B7RLE with the advert frames on the cove panels, has received local adverts, for University of Essex clearing.

44173 very unusual (and small!) on X30 (11th).

Hadleigh
Enviro 400 34452 has received a super rear advert for Iceland stores. It is similar to the Arriva Southend one illustrated in EBM 734 and the NIBS one reported last month (and illustrated on page 24 of this issue).

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dale Bell, Jack Benee, David Edwards, John Lidstone, John Podgorski, Roger A Smith, Derek Stebbing, Andrew Toms, Rob Webb, Bus Lists on the Web, Bustimes, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Below: First Essex and its predecessor companies have been operating a service to Bishop's Hall Estate since the introduction of route 262 in 1954, with various different route numbers used since Deregulation in 1986. From 1 September, this is reduced to Sundays only on the current 37. A partial M-S replacement is the introduction of Central Connect 60 over the same route from the same date. First Essex Enviro 200 44548 (YX13 AKN) is at Clarence Road, which had been the terminus of the 262, on 20 August 2025. **Chris Stewart**



First Essex News in Pictures

The inside front cover of EBM 727 (November 2024) featured three nearside photos of Enviro 400 33750 (SN12 AOK), one in First West of England orange Excel livery, one in Essex Bus green and one in new corporate livery. However, in the last of these the bus did not have fleet names or other decals, apart from fleet numbers. As at early July 2025 these still hadn't been applied, but finally had been by the end of the month as seen in this photo taken on 31st at Shoeburyness East Beach on route 26.

John G Lidstone



Another photo of a 37 at Bishop's Hall Estate, Enviro 200 44467 (YX12 DHE) at Hazelwood Gardens in the heavy morning rain on the penultimate day of First Essex commercial operation, 29 August 2025.

Chris Stewart



As reported last month, Enviro 200 MMC 67161 (YX66 OZW) was an unusual red vehicle on route X30 on 4-6 July, covering for vehicles being used at Silverstone for the British Grand Prix event. Here it is on 5th at Rayleigh Road, Eastwood. Ironically this bus was new for route X10 in silver and green livery and also previously operated on the X10 in current Airlink blue livery before receiving its third livery as seen here.

John G Lidstone





Enviro 400 33811 in First Eastern Counties Coastink livery at Mardens on 19 August 2025 having just been acquired by First Essex (see page 16) and prior to being repainted. It has impressive front destination blinds and full width rear blinds. As well as 36805 and 36811, the Essex Airlink Scanias 36837-43 are the only other vehicles in the fleet with these type of rear blinds. Disappointingly, the new electric vehicles will not have them. Both **John G Lidstone**



Acquired Vehicles

100	NK69 FAA	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 516CDI EVM Cityline, B16F, ex Go Ahead North East
101	NK69 FAF	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 516CDI EVM Cityline, B16F, ex Go Ahead North East

100 was the first minibus prepared for the 99 service Maldon - Chelmsford, Broomfield Hospital followed by 101.

102	BU18 YRO	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45, B17F, ex City of Oxford
103	BU18 YRP	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45, B17F, ex City of Oxford
104	BU18 YRR	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45, B17F, ex City of Oxford
105	BU18 YRS	Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45, B17F, ex City of Oxford

All four arrived at Sudbury depot in Oxford base dark blue by 6 August. They were ex City of Oxford 972-975. They have 13 fixed seats and four tip ups in the wheelchair area. The other two of the batch of six bought new by City of Oxford were 971, which was wearing branding for Blenheim Palace shuttle bus to Hanborough Station, and 976, for Pulham's, in August. Oxford and High Wycombe continue to use similar 23 plate machines locally.

Withdrawn Vehicles

259 (EU56 FLP) ADL Dart SLF / Pointer - removed from CN on low loader to PVS, Barnsley for scrap on 29 July.

461 (NK56 KJF) Scania OmniLink - reportedly withdrawn due to chassis defect leaving only 462 operational from the original batch of four.

Reported withdrawn are 470 and 510. Confirmation is awaited as these have been long term off road before and have been used in times of vehicle shortages.

Significant Allocations

100	NK69 FAA	SYu - KN	by w/c 21 July for route learning. In service by 28 July.
101	NK69 FAF	SYu - KN	by 7 August - see Fleet News below
103	BU18 YRP	SYu - KN	by 23 August
105	BU18 YRS	SYu - KN	by 23 August
249	LX13 CZC	CN - Konectbus	by 6 August
250	LX13 CZF	CN - Konectbus	by 7 August but returned to CN by 14 August
870	PN09 ELO	SY - KN	from 21 July
875	PN09 ENE	SY - KN	from 4 August but returned to SY by 12 August
877	PN09 ENO	HD - SY	by 23 July

Sible Hedingham, Kelvedon and Sudbury depots now rotate vehicles regularly so will not be reported in 'Allocations' as these change as per vehicle servicing and schedule demands. Allocations going forward will indicate in-group transfers and acquired vehicle allocations. Any unusual workings will still be covered in 'Fleet News'.

Fleet News

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter EVM Cityline 100 (NK69 FAA) transferred to Kelvedon to operate the 99 Maldon - Chelmsford, Broomfield Hospital service taken over from Stephensons. 100 started the route on 28 July and completed a full week, with service on the 40 Witham Town Service on Saturday 2 August, but on Monday 4 August it suffered a broken side window and had to be taken out of use. With 101 (NK69 FAF) not ready for service, two days of operation were lost until 101 operated the 1115 service to Broomfield Hospital on Wednesday 6 August. 101 tracked as 103 from its entry into service.

By Wednesday 6 August, another four Mercedes-Benz Sprinter minibuses had arrived at Sudbury, in base dark blue, the City of Oxford livery, with all vinyls removed. They are 102-105 (BU18 YRO/P/R/S) and are Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45 with Mercedes-Benz bodywork. They were new to City of Oxford in June 2018. During their time they have operated in Oxford under the 'PickMeUp' dial-a-ride scheme, similarly for Carousel in High Wycombe and for a similar scheme called 'Justgo' for East Yorkshire (based in North Lincolnshire), returning to Oxford for use on smaller

duties such as shuttles to the BMW plant. The vehicles were returned ex lease but then purchased. 103 and 105, at least, have received Konectbuses fleet names on their dark blue livery. 103 worked route 375 on 27 August, the last day of the route. 105 entered service on route 99 on 21 August.

Recent ADL Enviro 400 arrival 632 (SN65 OAO) received 74/76 graphics w/c 21 July. It was delivered to Konectbuses in base livery with no graphics as per photo on page 1 of EBM 735.

Transferred to Konectbus, Dereham were Enviro 200s 249 / 250 (LX13 CZC/F), these transferred in Hedingham & Chambers livery but with Konectbus vinyls applied only to front dash panels. 250 subsequently returned a week later maybe due to the arrival of 270/1, see below.

Further to EBM 727, Enviro 200 271 (YX61 BXM) finally entered service in Dereham on 1 August, in full version of the new livery with Konectbus fleet names, complete with a mid-offside emergency exit to comply with certification regulations; as it was originally a two door single-decker (from Go Ahead London, SE class) there was no offside emergency exit, and so an offside emergency exit had to be installed as part of the rebuild. Similar 270 (YX61 BXL) followed the same and entered service on 14 August in Norfolk. It is not known if the YX61 DVP/R pair originally single doored and repainted at Plymouth are to be treated similarly, we wait to see.

Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini open topper 502 (LF52 ZNE) re-entered service on 14 August and now sees most of its output on service 6A, Point Clear - Clacton, Pier Avenue, with one day spent working on the Airshow Shuttle service A1 on 22 August. It had been off road receiving repairs after failing in service at the end of July. A photo of it is on the inside rear cover.

Vehicles off road or limited availability in late July / mid-August 2025 were 266 (accident damage), 292/470/510/ 517/ 524/652/809/810/821/830.

Service News

Before being withdrawn, veteran Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Gemini 510 (LB02 YWX) was one of the buses from Sible Hedingham depot operating on the expanded 88 service on the first day of full commercial operation by Konectbuses on 28 July. Those in the vehicle rota were 615/813/528/292/510/295/535. The increase in vehicle requirements and services covered by Kelvedon and Sible schools vehicles has made the output on the 88 varied and somewhat vintage. This is a far cry from the Quality Bus Partnership advertised in September 2016 where Hedingham and First Essex (and at that time Regal Busways) were to provide quality buses. The service now seems to be in the hands of ex Brighton & Hove and ex Go Ahead London cast offs in a multitude of colour schemes. The route has seen original Hedingham livery, H&C revised livery, LT red, old Konectbus and Brighton & Hove liveries.

From 31 August, Konectbuses relaunched Sudbury services with lower route numbers in a sequence between 40 and 50. The new Sudbury town service is included. Details of the routes that serve Essex, plus the Sudbury - Ipswich service, are reported in 'Service Revisions' above. Other new numbers are as follows. Old numbers are in brackets but in some cases the new services may not follow exactly the same routes or times as the ones they are replacing.

41 (236) Sudbury - Clare; 45 (375) Sudbury - Bury St Edmunds via Shimpling - 375 had been Wednesdays only, 45 is M-S; 47 (374) Clare - Bury St Edmunds; 47A (373) Sudbury - Bury St Edmunds via Glemsford; 49 (n/a) Sudbury town service, Sudbury Bus Station - Chaucer Road - Tesco - Acton Lane.

Route A1 ran on 21 & 22 August for the Clacton Airshow car park shuttle, from Clacton Shopping Village to the seafront during the airshow and fireworks show hours.

Other News

Preserved L103 (BAR 103X), L148 (WPH 135Y) and 573 (W491 WGH) attended the Big Bus Show at Stonham Barns on 10 August. A photo of L148 at the event is on the inside rear cover.

With thanks to Dave Arnold, John Podgorski and the Konectbuses website.

Opposite page: Recently acquired minibuses with contrasting bodywork. **Top**: Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 516CDI / EVM Cityline 100 (NK69 FAA) leaving Colchester Bus Station on driver training on 25 July 2025, three days before entering service on newly won ECC contract 99. **Richard Lewis** **Bottom**: Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 45 / Mercedes-Benz 105 (BU18 YRS) in Sudbury Depot on 21 August 2025. **Dave Arnold**


Driver Training
konectbuses
100
NK69 FAA


THE ARMY IS REC
SEARCH ARMY JOBS
Sudbury 84
812
konectbuses
105
BU18 YRS

Correction to EBM 736
Last month's article made reference to new services 23/A/B stating "see 'Service Revisions' above". Apologies, these were accidentally not included in Service Revisions (the Editor's error). This month really do see 'Service Revisions' above.

New Vehicles
Further to last month, mini ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMCs (8.9m) 311-316 have now all entered service. 315 is still at Rochford but the others are now at Boreham (all except 313 operated briefly from Rochford before transfer).

Longer (10.8m) 371-373 have now been delivered and been prepared for routes 23/A/B with 'LeighLink' branding, see photos on pages 26 & 27. The official pre-service launch of the routes took place on Tuesday 19 August at The Launchpad on the Airport Business Park. Unlike 311-6, they are to ADL dealer spec rather than Stephensons' own, such was the need to acquire new buses quickly for the newly won contract.

Withdrawn Vehicles
Around 10 older single-deck vehicles are scheduled for withdrawal, although some will remain in reserve. The last two Optare Solos in service, 327 and 328, are currently stored at NIBS Shotgate depot as are Enviro 200s 414 and 422.

With thanks to Richard Delahoy, John Lidstone and the companies.

Below: As reported last month, NIBS Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekka 630 (EU05 ECV) has received a super rear advert for Iceland store. It is seen on route 21 in Brentwood High Street passing Tescos (although it had just passed Iceland!) on 20 August 2025. **Chris Stewart**. Chris writes: "630 is now 20 years old and has certainly repaid the £150k (from memory) it cost new. It was NIBS first brand new bus purchase. I remember borrowing it when it was two days old and taking it to Wickford Station for some photos. I suppose I'd have to be type trained on it nowadays!"
See page 30 for more on type training.





Above: Stephensons former Arrow Taxis Mercedes-Benz 516CDI Sprinter / Altas 201 (AY17 UVM) on route 17 at Leigh-on-Sea station on 6 August 2025. After ADL Enviro 200 436 needed a short break, this meant that the last two journeys of service 17 had a slight vehicular difficulty so 201 was sent out to maintain service. This had been being used for route learning for the new 23/A/B. **John G Lidstone**. A photo of sister 202 was in last month's EBM.
Below: As reported last month, former Eastern National and Thamesway Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X) was presented at the Guildhall in London at the annual Cart Marking ceremony on 19 July 2025. **Andrew Colebourne**
This bus ran on the annual ImberBus service on 16 August, performing faultlessly both on the day and on the journey to and from Wiltshire.





New ADL E20D / Enviro 200 MMCs. Above: Further to last month, 8.9m 312 (YW25 DFV) on its first full day of service, 26 July 2025, on route 14 in Chichester Road, approaching Southend Travel Centre. **Richard Delahoy**
311 only worked from Rochford on 26 July and 312 on 25th & 26th before they moved to Boreham.
Below: 10.8m 372 (YW25 FNJ) at the pre-launch run over new routes 23/A/B on 19 August, at Leigh-on-Sea Station. **John G Lidstone**
Both batches have unusual silver rather than black around the light clusters at the front, the longer ones are topped by black. The branding on the longer ones has necessitated moving the side fleet names to the cove panels.





More photos from the pre-launch event featuring 372. Cake and bottom photo at Launchpad, others at Leigh-on-Sea Station. All photos **Stephensons** except rear photo **John G Lidstone**









Part of Transport Made Simple, includes Simonds (where relevant) and Flagfinders

Vehicle News
Further to last month, Enviro 200 926 (MX12 DZE) was back at Flagfinders by early August.

Ex Whitelaws Enviro 200 MMC 344 (JW16 BUS) had been in silver livery with red front bumpers, as illustrated in EBM 722 (June 2024). In March this year the bumpers were repainted silver and now the bus has been repainted into fleet livery (c early August 2025) although without fleet names and other decals.

All white Enviro 200 MMC 351 (YY73 TGV) is now branded for its new role on Waterbeach route 100 in Cambridgeshire.

Driver Trainer Dart 900 (KP02 PVO) has been withdrawn and is now registered as SORN.

Services
In last month's issue Richard Delahoy noted that there are premium fares on night journeys on route 333, a £1 single surcharge applies to journeys on the 0040 & 0345 ex Stansted and 0240 & 0440 ex Braintree and he asked if anyone knew if this happened on Arriva's previous 133. David Whiteside has replied: "Arriva fares were the same all day, no nighttime premium. For the time being this is a bit academic, I've travelled on 0240 from Braintree to Stansted and the charge to the passenger is £3 due to the fare cap. It probably does though affect what Central Connect are reimbursed but that's speculation on my part. However, Central Connect have made some fares lower than the former Arriva fare. For example, Rayne to Braintree is now £2 whereas on Arriva it was £2.50."

Below: In EBM 734 we reported that former Vectare Mercedes-Benz Tourismo 417 (W17 VEC) was now at Simonds with their fleet names. It is seen at the Stonham Barns Bus Rally on 10 August 2025. This was new to Evergreen, Smethwick as BU18 YSD in June 2018. **Paul Harvey**



Other Operators

Roger A Smith

Barker, Roydon
Bova FHD13 J444 MBD (ex BW53 PSW, AF53 MMF) has gone from here.

Jones, Braintree
YX25 OHC, an Alexander Dennis E20D / Enviro 200 MMC, B30F, was brand new here in May 2025.

Roman Coaches, Colchester
Reported as brand new here in June 2025 is YK25 OLN, a Yutong T122HDH, C53FLT.

With thanks to the PSV Circle.

Across Essex in Two REs

This tour on Saturday 9 August featuring two former Eastern National REs proved to be very successful, despite delays caused by the police having closed one road near Colchester Railway Station causing severe congestion. Traffic was hardly moving on roads from the station into the City Centre. Thus the two REs could not go back into the City Centre to resume their planned routes, so had to go north, then west along the A12 to rejoin the planned routes at Colchester Tollgate. Full details of the planned itinerary were on page 4 of EBM 735. Many thanks to the Omnibus Society for organising the tour and to owners David Edwards (1516, FWC 439H) and Luke Deal (1546, SVW 274K) for making their vehicles available and driving them on the day. A photo of 1516 was on the front cover of EBM 733, so here is one of 1546 on the tour in Jackson Road, Clacton, with 1516 just visible behind. **Robert Appleton**



Type Training - or the lack of!

Richard Delahoy

I was very interested to read Alan 'Tebzy' Tebbit's article "What does it say on your badge?" in last month's EBM and the assumption by Joe Osborne that if you have a PSV licence, you should know how to drive any vehicle. I only ever drove part time on a casual basis, so type training was largely non-existent. Indeed, as a collection / delivery driver for Ensignbus, the instructions might be "your bus is in a yard 200 / 300 miles away, see you tomorrow"! A torch was useful for navigating the cab but in many cases, the lettering on switches had long since worn away, so a fair degree of guesswork and trial and error was called for. Mind you, even armed with an instruction book as I was for Southend Transport's Van Hool Astromegas, I never did fully get the hang of the heating and ventilation system on those fabulous coaches.

One embarrassing episode when some training would have helped was when I was driving a Volvo B10M of Stephensons on a private hire for my railway club. Having visited the Steam Museum at Swindon, I had started up OK but couldn't release the brakes. No-one had explained to me about the small (unlabelled) button called the Broms brake, which I'd accidentally pressed. As I've just read in an on-line forum, "the Broms brake button is a trap for most new players and older ones too. [The author] has known drivers who have driven the bus for years and never had to touch it until they can't move and don't know why" - exactly my predicament! Luckily a call to base and all was resolved reasonably quickly.

Another incident I recall was when doing some holiday driving for Grahams of Paisley (as per my piece in EBM 733). I'd used a shuttle van to go up to the main Glasgow to Paisley Road to take over a bus mid journey. I set up my ticket machine etc. and went to pull away but couldn't find the door control anywhere. No buttons on the dash, no lever on the side panels, no rocker switch for the left foot. In the end I decided I'd have to drive to the next stop in the hope of solving the puzzle - which I did immediately on putting the bus in gear, because the door control was the 6th position on the electric gear selector! Positions 1 to 4 were forward gears, 5 for reverse and 6 for doors. A lesson quickly learnt. With tightly timed services, it was common to open the doors as you pulled into a stop, which on this Atlantean meant pushing the small lever right over to the left and up. You can see what's coming, I'm sure. On one occasion I didn't push the lever over *quite* far enough and ended up engaging first gear instead, leading the bus to nose dive. A mistake you only made once . . .

Alan talked about his experience with Eastern National. I witnessed a more recent situation, maybe 15 years ago now, where the lack of type training led to problems. I was at Lakeside for the annual Ensignbus heritage running day, as was Leon Daniels, then Customer Services Director for First Group. An Olympian on First Essex's route 200 came in to the bus station and the driver got off to use the toilet. Except that she left the engine running. When she returned to her bus, Leon introduced himself to her and asked why she had left the bus unattended with the engine running (which is an offence). Her reply of "I don't know how to turn it off" didn't go down well!! She explained that she had taken over the bus in Basildon Bus Station from another driver and the engine was already running. She'd not had any type training on Olympians. A swift phone call to the then MD of First Essex rather spoilt his day as a consequence.

So type training does have a place and is vital in today's bus industry.

CPT Ride & Drive - North Weald

Richard Delahoy

The industry trade body CPT held its annual Ride & Drive event at North Weald aerodrome on 28 July 2025. Fifteen new buses and coaches were available for CPT members to inspect and drive round a circuit on the airfield, many brand new and as yet unregistered. Primarily coaches, the range included the latest diesel and electric models from Irizar, Scania, Mercedes-Benz and Yutong along with various mini / midi coaches and an ADL Enviro 200 MMC from Dawson Rentals.

Undoubtedly the quirkiest was the 12-seat Karsan e-JEST electric minibus demonstrated by importer EVM. A trial drive revealed it to handle very well, with a big bus feel to it, but it is difficult to see what commercial opportunities there are for a vehicle of this size.



Above: The 12-seat Karsan e-JEST electric minibus. **Richard Delahoy**

Stephensons Scania driver trainer 754 (A17 SOE) was in use for a driver challenge, along with National Express West Midlands similar Scania BV57 XHE kitted out as a static driver simulator unit.

Also on site were three heritage buses, Stephensons ex Eastern National / Thamesway Bristol VR / ECW 3129 (XHK 234X), Optare Vectra M73 WYG ex Black Prince of Leeds - with an Essex connection, it also ran for Lodge's - and the "Rust to Rome" Leyland Leopard / Alexander YSF 87S new to Alexander Fife. Finally, serving drinks was the former Ipswich Buses Optare Solo YN04 LWK, now converted as "The Best Bar None" (as illustrated in EBM 711, July 2023).

Below: Line up of vehicles with the Enviro 200 MMC from Dawson Rentals, YX74 OFU, plus various other coaches, the one nearest being an AOS Grand Toro. **Richard Delahoy**



200 Years of Railway Travel



Heritage vehicles were used to link Derby Station and the Alstom Works for the Greatest Gathering event on 1-3 August 2025 to celebrate 200 years of railway travel. **Above**: London Bus Company's RT3238 (KYY 967), in Green Line livery, is fully blinded for Epping Ongar Railway 339 in Midland Road, Derby on 1st. **Andrew Colebourne**
Incidentally, closely numbered RT3232 (KYY 961), in the same livery, which is part of the Zero2 Bus Museum's collection, was on the front cover of last month's EBM.
Below: Keith Valla's RF539 (NLE 539) displaying route number 390 to Old Harlow (an old London Transport route) in Cathedral Street, Derby on Sunday 3rd. **Paul Sparks**



EBM 720 (April 2024) included a feature by Carl Lemon about his acquisition of former Hedingham L148 (WPH 135Y). This is a Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R, new to London Country for Green Line services, later with Kentish Bus, acquired by Hedingham in June 1988, originally with an ECW B51 body, but rebodied as a service bus with an East Lancs EL2000 body in early 1994. A photo of L148 in Venturer livery after acquisition by Carl accompanied the article. L148 has now been repainted into Hedingham livery as seen **right** at the Stonham Barns Bus Rally on 10 August 2025. **Paul Harvey**



Below: Volvo B7TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini open top 502 (LF52 ZNE) on its route for 2025, 6A to Point Clear, on 18 August 2025 at Pier Avenue, Clacton. Now with 'Konectbuses' fleet names replacing the previous 'Hedingham & Chambers' ones. **Derek Stebbing**



Rear Cover Photos

In EBM 733 we reported that 63463 (MC72 UYB) had been repainted from Essex Bus green to new corporate livery, but without vinyls and (for now) retaining 'Essex Bus' branding, returning to service on 24 April this year. It is seen **top** on route 28 in London Road, Leigh on 1 May. **John G Lidstone**. It didn't have an 'Essex Bus' fleet name on the offside as this had been on the lower panels and so was lost in the repaint, but did retain the wording on the cove panels; it retained the fleet name on front, nearside and rear. **Bottom**: By 19 August this bus had lost Essex Bus branding (including the "pay contactless on all our buses" wording) and received new fleet names and dividing stripes, plus a replacement, smaller, front fleet number, seen that day at Southend Travel Centre. **Robert Appleton**





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