

Essex Bus Magazine

Current news and historical features

Issue 697 May 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

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Essex Bus Magazine

Focus on First Essex's radical service changes

Issue 697 supp. May 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

&

Omnibus Society

Eastern & Southern Branch

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Most publicity was initially only on-line, including pdf time-tables in two distinct, different styles reflecting the green Essex Bus branding for longer services and the red Shuttle identity for town/city networks, but some leaflets were being handed out at bus stations and were available on buses, as with this version far right.

336

Mondays to Fridays except public holidays

0615	0650	0720	0738	0830	0738	0830	0931	31	1531	1611	1651	1721	1806	1836	1913	2010	2121
		0723	0741	0834	0741	0834	0934	34	1534	1614	1654						
0620	0655	0728	0746	0840	0746	0840	0940	40	1540	1620	1659	1727	1812	1842	1919	2014	2125
0630	0705	0739	0757	0851	0756	0851	0950	50	1550	1630	1709	1737	1822	1852	1924	2024	2135
0635	0710	0745	0803	0857	0801	0857	0955	55	1555	1635	1714	1742	1827	1857	1924	2029	2140
0646	0721	0755	0813	0907	0811	0907	1005	05	1605								
0657	0737	0810	0833	0927	0825	0919	1020	20	1617								

Saturdays

0741	0836	0933	1031	at	31	il	1731	1926	2121	2221
0744	0839	0936	1034		34		1734	-	-	-
0749	0844	0941	1039		39		1739	1930	2125	2225

S2

Stanway | town centre | Highwoods

Mondays to Fridays

	Stanway	Sonsbury's	Cochester Head Street	Cochester rail station	General Hospital	Highwoods Tesco
0550	0612	0617	0622	0634		
0615	0637	0642	0647	0659		
0635	0659	0704	0709	0721		
0655	0719	0724	0729	0742		
0710	0735	0740	0746	0759		
0725	0746	0751	0757	0810		
0735	0801	0807	0814	0828		
0755	0821	0827	0834	0848		
0810	0837	0844	0851	0905		
0825	0851	0857	0904	0918		
0840	0906	0913	0919	0932		
0855	0922	0928	0934	0947		
0906	0932	0937	0943	0956		
0926	0950	0955	1001	1014		

then every 20 mins

	46	10	15	21	34
06	30	35	41	54	54
26	50	55	01	14	14

until

1426	1450	1455	1501	1514
1441	1505	1510	1516	1529
1453	1518	1523	1529	1542
1505	1532	1538	1544	1557
1517	1544	1550	1556	1609

**simpler
smarter
shuttles**



getting about is getting better

from **First** 

Essex Bus Magazine - Supplement to Issue 697 from the
Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group and the
Omnibus Society Eastern & Southern Branch

May 2022

Introduction

First Essex Buses introduced the most extensive and radical set of service revisions in the history of the operator and its predecessor, Eastern National, on 17 April 2022. Because the changes are so far reaching there is not space in our normal Essex Bus Magazine to explain them, nor in the Omnibus Society’s usual Eastern & Southern Bulletin. Hence EBEG and the OS (E&S) have joined forces to produce this supplement which is being sent to members free of charge. In it, we explain the background to the decision to make far reaching changes, followed by area-by-area listings detailing the new routes and explaining their relationship to the old networks. Finally we consider some operational aspects and offer a historical context.

We have drawn heavily on First Group publicity but must emphasise that this publication represents our analysis of the changes, and the editorial comments reflect our interpretation of events, all based on information available at the time of writing (on-line sources sometimes later get amended without that being obvious). We hope that members of both the EBEG and the OS will find it an interesting and useful record of a seismic change in bus provision across Essex.



Supplement Editor: Richard Delahoy CMILT **Editorial team:** Robert Appleton, Paul Harvey, Adam Kelleher, Ian Ransom.

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Front Cover: The most significant aspect of the changes to services is the conversion of town/city local routes in Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester to a new Shuttle brand, with most routes shortened to run just from the estates or satellite towns to the centre. On the first weekday of the new network, 19 April, Volvo 7900 hybrid 69913 picks up at Pitsea Broadway East en-route to Basildon on the new B3, over part of the former service 5. It is still in the special livery applied to this batch of buses for use on the 100, Lakeside - Basildon - Chelmsford which had earlier been split into two sections and where the northern half is now renumbered 300.

To address air quality issues in Basildon, the town Shuttle network has been converted to operation by hybrid single deckers, principally using the 19 Volvos previously on the 100, 69901-19, with occasional appearances by the four ADL Enviro 350H hybrids, 67901-4. Some of the hybrids also still work other routes, principally the 100/300. All the hybrids are 12m long, creating some difficulties in the mostly 1960s and 1970s estate roads across Basildon.

It also demonstrates how destination displays have been altered to move the numbers to the offside (and in a thicker typeface) with a half-height prefix letter, and how town/city shuttle services just show 'Bus Station' or 'City Centre' without the locality being named.
Richard Delahoy.

The bus industry, not just in Essex, is facing an existential crisis. Here we look at some of the reasons, to put into context the changes First have introduced.

Even before the Coronavirus pandemic hit, bus operators across the country were facing increasing problems, with rising costs, staff shortages, worsening traffic congestion and passenger numbers stagnating or dropping. Then the world changed overnight early in 2020 with the onset of the pandemic, lockdown and a radically changed attitude to public transport. Almost overnight passenger numbers plummeted, often to around just 10% of pre-pandemic levels. Operators responded by reducing services and furloughing staff but maintained their networks, often running almost empty buses to support the travel needs of key workers. Government messaging was particularly unhelpful, presenting public transport as dangerous and to be avoided if at all possible.

The country then went through a series of relaxations and reintroductions of restrictions which we don't intend to list all here as they are well documented elsewhere. However, as the country has moved back towards a large degree of normality, the situation facing the bus industry remains particularly difficult. Whilst we don't have access to specific figures for First Essex, typically the industry has seen fare-paying passenger numbers rising to only around 75-80% of the pre-pandemic level, but concession passengers have been much more reluctant to return, with numbers at perhaps 50-60% at best.

The initial reaction of central Government was to support the industry financially in various ways:

- CBSSG (Coronavirus Bus Service Support Grant) - this underwrote all operating losses between March 2020 and August 2021, ensuring that bus operators broke even (with a reduced level of support for any that were still profitable);
- Encouraging Local Authorities to continue to pay reimbursement for concessionary fare passes (ENCTS) at historic levels despite the huge reduction in passenger numbers, and to continue to pay for tendered services and school contracts even when not being operated;
- Continuing to pay BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant) based on the mileage that would have been operated in the absence of the pandemic, not the actual reduced mileage being operated.

This all had the effect of enabling the industry to survive and then to start to rebuild service levels as restrictions were eased and passenger numbers recovered.

From September 2021, CBSSG was replaced by the less generous BRG (Bus Recovery Grant) through to March 2022, and more recently the Government has extended BRG, but at a reduced level worth perhaps only 60% of the previous funding, through to end-September 2022, and have said that there will be no further support thereafter. BRG was intended to bridge the gap until passenger numbers recovered to pre-pandemic levels, but as noted above, that recovery has a long way to go and many expect that we will not see a return to 100% for a very long while, if at all - unless central and local government take radical steps towards modal shift away from cars.

Against that backdrop and the other pressures affecting the industry, many operators are taking drastic action to ensure their viability and to try to win back passenger confidence. The following factors are now at play:

- The passenger recovery appears to have stalled/plateaued;
- There has been no effective action by Government to counter the previous negative messaging and to encourage passengers back to bus (unlike the rail industry's advertising campaigns);
- Working from home has become the norm for many people and is likely to have resulted in a permanent shift in travel patterns;
- The trend towards on-line shopping has intensified and we continue to see a decline in the quality of the main town/city centre shopping areas, which have become less attractive as destinations;
- After many years of low inflation, 2022's major increases in the cost-of-living mean people have less disposable income, making bus travel less affordable;
- Reimbursement for ENCTS concession passes is set to be reduced progressively from historic levels to amounts based on the actual number of passengers being carried - this will result in a substantial further drop in bus company revenues;
- Government intends to reform BSOG, with an uncertain outcome at this stage;
- Staff shortages are continuing, with the loss of foreign workers due to Brexit, lifestyle changes after furlough by former staff, full employment in many areas, wage levels and the ever-present issue of unattractive hours/shift patterns in the bus industry;
- Operating costs are continuing to increase, most notably diesel fuel, where the impact of the recent massive rises is even more pronounced for the bus industry after allowing for the impact of BSOG and VAT;
- None of the three authorities in First Essex's operating area have received funding for their BSIPs (Bus Service Improvement Plans) - although that outcome was not known at the point where First had to make decisions about its service changes.

Of course, these factors are not unique to Essex and First's reactions reflect what is happening across much of the industry.

Here's how First Essex have explained the changes.

"From Sunday 17th April we are making changes to your bus networks across the county.

These changes are in response to the change in our travel habits; people are travelling less often and have less certainty about how many times a day or week they require travel.

These changes are designed to deliver sustainable networks, that are easier to use and continue to provide the ability to travel around the towns and villages across the county on our services.

Some buses will run earlier and later in the day, some more often, some less often and there will be new networks in the Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester areas.

Buses that connect the local suburbs to the centre of Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester will be replaced by locally focussed services with simple, regular timetables, simple, easy to use fares starting at £2.50 for an adult and with new, newer, or fully refurbished vehicles being introduced over the coming months with a new red based colour scheme.

The services that we provide to connect other towns and cities to these locations and each other will also start to see new, newer, or fully refurbished vehicles being introduced and will become Essex Bus services in our new exciting green based colour scheme.

We have already simplified the fares in Chelmsford and Colchester and, from the same date (17th April), we will be bringing the same flexible way to pay, for bus travel, by introducing Tap&Cap to Basildon.

Unfortunately, we are having to increase a small number of ticket prices in South Essex. However, we are not increasing any other fares at this time in recognition of the fact we are all paying more for daily essentials.

Fares increases will be necessary in the future as our costs are also increasing but we will try and keep these increases to a minimum".

The key themes are new brands, frequency reductions, renumbering and creating shorter town/city services. Here then is our analysis of the changes.

Three brands

The marketing of the revised services segments them into three distinct brands – Shuttles, with a red livery for town/city networks, EssexBus with the recently introduced green livery for inter-urban routes, and the existing blue-liveried **airlink** (X10, X30 to Stansted Airport). In practice, the majority of the fleet is still in a number of versions of the standard First corporate colours, along with seven buses in a variety of heritage liveries and two in special schemes (Pride, Remembrance).

Frequency reductions - but some longer days

One of the most obvious impacts of the changes is in the reduction of frequencies. In many cases this has meant 15-minute headways widening to every 20 minutes, and some half-hourly services have been halved to become hourly on the interurban routes (such as Chelmsford to South Woodham, Maldon to Burnham, Colchester to Braintree). In the new town/city networks typically the changes are reducing the Monday to Friday headways to the Saturday levels, although some corridors have retained their previous headways and there are a small number of improvements.

In Basildon, some town services have earlier starts and later finishes than before, sometimes of an hour or more both at the start and end of the day, every day of the week. This is to be commended!

Network coverage

In contrast, the changes have not resulted in any significant reductions in the scope of the First Essex network. This is very much in line with government expectations that networks will be maintained. There have only been relatively minor losses of service on certain roads, such as sections of the 21 in the Southend area. First no longer run east of Southend city centre (apart from the occasional Amazon service Z3) after the withdrawal of the 26 to Southchurch although that section has been taken up by Stephensons with a new 24A.

Shuttles

The most radical part of the changes is the creation of new networks in three key towns/cities - Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester. All existing commercial local services have been cancelled and replaced with new shuttles, most only running from the estates to the town/city centre, although some cross-town routes remain in Colchester and Chelmsford and in practice, a number of routes interwork when they reach the centre. These routes all use a location-specific prefix, so Basildon routes are B1 etc, Chelmsford C1 etc and Colchester S1 etc - having two places both beginning with C is obviously a problem! We gather S was chosen for Shuttle.

A problem with cutting routes at the bus station or centre is the impact on passengers making journeys across the centre - for example in Basildon from the Asda store one stop east of the bus station going towards Laindon, or in Chelmsford boarding at the Tesco in Springfield Road for points to the west/north-west of the city. They are inconvenienced both by a change of bus and potentially higher fares through needing to pay twice (although that is alleviated by daily capping if paying by contactless card, but cash payers are particularly disadvantaged). It is especially galling for those who find that the bus they are on terminates at the centre but are unaware that the same vehicle then changes to a new route and continues to their desired destination!

A surprising consequence in Basildon is also that the only First routes now serving the Hospital are the 100 & 200, giving a combined daytime headway of every 10 minutes, and outward journeys on half-hourly B2, but all start from the bus station. Previously the 5A/B served the hospital (5 only towards Laindon as B2 does now, 5A/B in both directions). Effectively this means almost all passengers going to the hospital from within the town area (including Pitsea) now need to change in the bus station. The infrequent ECC supported 10 from Wickford also continues to go to the hospital but, along with other ECC routes, isn't shown on the new town maps, nor is the B2 routing via the hospital.

Renumbering and Simplification - or not?

Of the 117 different route numbers in use immediately before the changes, the new network has reduced this to 97. Only 60 of the old numbers are still in use and more than half of those are for ECC contracts or school services, so a very significant part of the commercial offer has new numbers. A large part of this results from the town/city revisions but it is hard to see how passengers will benefit from some of the renumberings such as 62 becoming 87, 67 to 86 and 36 to 336, for example.

The new numbers appear to be simplified as there is now almost no use of suffix letters (except on the 27A, 42A, 88A/B and tendered services, where ECC specify the route numbers), reducing the total number of different route numbers in use, but that doesn't mean complexity has been eliminated. In some cases routes still have variations but those are no longer identified by discrete numbers. Indeed, there are over 20 routes which have multiple different routings under a single service number.

To give some examples, Colchester route 67 which had variants 67B and 67C has been replaced by a single number 86 but that service actually now has *four** different terminals/routes in Colchester - to the General Hospital (daytime M-S), starting from Osborne Street (early & late M-S), to/from Norman Way (school trips) or to Mason Road (Sundays). Neither the Norman Way nor the Mason Road variants appear on the map either. Other examples include Chelmsford C5, where a small number of journeys have a different route in Moulsham M-F morning peak and in the afternoon, and C8, C9 & C11 which run direct via Victoria Road at certain times but via Springfield Road off peak, in all cases using the same number irrespective of the routing. Yet on C7, where part of the evening service omits Meadgate Road in Great Baddow, these trips do get a different number, C57 (perhaps it is ECC supported). In Southend, school trips on 21 follow a different route to the rest of the service but all are called 21.

A new series of numbers in the 300s has been created for inter-urban services to/from Chelmsford (but not other areas), although in some cases they are variants of another route, eg 331 is a variant of 31 (or perhaps vice versa). 36 (Chelmsford to South Woodham) thus becomes 336.

** Update: 67 actually has 5 variations not 4, as Sunday buses run via Mersea Road not Military Road, in Monkwick go via the Silver Oyster and double run via Lethe Grove.*

Colchester competition

Whilst many of the changes represent reduced frequencies, there are two interesting developments in Colchester, both increasing the competition with Arriva Colchester, whose town network takes in Greenstead, Highwoods, Monkwick, Shrub End and Horkesley Heath (Arriva services 1, 2, 8). New First service S8 is one of only a handful of routes across the whole First Essex network to see an increased frequency (C10 on M-F and part of Basildon B1 are the others), where the half-hourly former 67 is replaced through Monkwick by S8 running every 15 minutes, in addition to Arriva's six buses an hour. 67, renumbered to 86, also provides an hourly bus along Mersea Road.

To the north of the town, First are breaking new ground commercially by extending buses on the 87 (ex 62) half-hourly north of Colchester rail station along Nayland Road to Horkesley Heath, in direct competition with Arriva's 20 minute headway service 2. It's not clear to us whether that area really justifies or needs five buses an hour in the current climate. (First already serve there evenings/Sundays but only on ECC contract, not commercially).



EN's traditional service along Nayland Road was the 85 and their involvement in that route, which was joint with Norfolk's of Nayland, ceased as long ago as October 1976. EN had returned briefly to Nayland Road on Tuesdays & Fridays off-peak from January to October in 1993 with services 77/178 and then with an infrequent service 81 of seven return journeys for 3 months at the start of 1994.

StreetLite 63333 in the High Street on the S8, 26 April. **Robert Appleton**.

(Incidentally, First seemed a little confused with names and spellings. The new northern terminus of the 87 is described as Horksley (sic) Heath and the same spelling mistake afflicted destination displays - there should be an 'e' after the 'k' - although this has since been corrected, while the timetable describes it as Great Horkesley - spelt correctly).



Above, 32669, still in Scottish blue livery, shows the mis-spelling in **Keith Ward's** picture taken on 21 April. Left, **Robert Appleton** caught 67739 at the Malvern Way terminus two days earlier, about to return cross-town and onwards to Brightlingsea.

Southend is different

The Shuttle brand has not been extended to Southend, where the geography doesn't fit the concept so well, in practice all services are effectively inter-urban, radiating out from Southend to Canvey, Basildon and Hullbridge, with end-to-end journey times of an hour to 90 minutes. The main impact of the changes in south-east Essex has therefore been in reducing M-F frequencies, generally from every 15 minutes to every 20.

Only one route has been withdrawn, the more localised Hadleigh - Southend - Southchurch 26. West of Southend it is largely replaced by rerouting the existing 21 (albeit with reduced frequency compared to the old 26), and the section east of Southend city centre has been abandoned, but Stephensons have picked it up with their new 24A, complementing their existing 24 which together offer a 15-minute headway from the Newton Avenue area.

However, despite being the largest town/city in Essex, Southend is not benefitting from the trend elsewhere to earlier Sunday buses. Contrast these first arrivals in the respective town/city centres:

Sunday arrivals:

Basildon: 0720 (B1, then every 30 mins), 0725 (B3, then ev. 30), 0735 (B5, then ev. 30), 0753 (B2, then hourly), 0755 (B4, then ev. 30), 0814 (25), 0851 (100), 0851 (300)
 - 18 arrivals before 0900

Chelmsford: 0632 (C1, then 5 more before 0900), 0717 (C9, then hourly), 0747 (C10, then hourly), 0835 (370, 0844 (C2), 0850 (300), 0854 (C5)
 - 15 arrivals before 0900

Colchester: 0628 (S1, then 9 more before 0900), 0705 (S2, then 6 more), 0830 (2A - ECC contract), 0858 (S4)
 - 19 arrivals before 0900.

Southend: 0853 (25), 0855 (27), 0911 (28), 0925 (27), 0931 (21), 0940 (20).
 Only 2 buses before 0900. (Arriva's Sunday morning offer is equally poor!).

Tap & Cap

A fundamental part of the simplification of the town/city networks outside of the Southend area is the setting of a flat fare within each of those areas. A single flat fare has then facilitated the introduction of "tap & cap" using contactless cards - passengers simply tap in and are charged according to the number of trips made in a week (Monday to Sunday), capped at a maximum daily price and a cumulative weekly maximum. There is no need to tap out. Tap & Cap is available on all services for travel within the respective local zone, including on inter-urban services (but not on X10/X30 locally between Chelmsford and Broomfield Hospital, where a £3.70 single is charged). It's not clear what safeguards exist to prevent someone travelling say from Chelmsford to Colchester and back on a 371 from simply tapping in in Chelmsford but travelling all the way to Colchester, then tapping in there and travelling all the way back, for £5.

The table below sets out the daily pricing, which is a little complicated but follows the principle that the more you travel, the cheaper it becomes per trip.

Zone	First trip	Daily cap, day 1	Daily cap, days 2-4	Daily cap, days 5-7	Weekly cap
Basildon	£2.50	£6	£5	£1	£24
Chelmsford	£2.50	£6	£5	£1	£24

Zone	First trip	Daily cap, days 1-3	Daily cap, day 4	Daily cap, days 5/6	Day 7	Weekly cap
Colchester	£2.50	£4.40	£2.80	£1	Free	£18

A consequence of these changes is that the only cash fare now available on bus on the town/city networks is £2.50 single (plus some limited £1 short hop singles); returns have been abolished although daily and weekly tickets can be bought on bus for cash or by contactless card. This seems to penalise those without bank/credit cards, especially where the new networks force a change of bus in the centre and hence having to pay again.

Only the Basildon map shows the fare zone boundary, we assume that in the other two locations, tap&cap is only available in the area shown by the network maps, plus Boreham, Gt Waltham and Margaretting, based on the vague map on-line showing all fare zones. There continue to be wider zones for period tickets, as there are for Brentwood, Thurrock and Southend.

Tickets

For cash payers and concession pass holders (who receive printed nil value tickets), ticket headers were changed from the end of April to show the brand applicable to the service, ie shuttles, EssexBus or airlink, as seen in these examples:



Fleet changes and allocations

There have been relatively few changes to the fleet disposition and size at this stage. Please see the Operational Notes on page 30 for more details.

Destination displays

Coinciding with the service revisions was a change to the style of the electronic destination displays. We have covered this more fully in a Blind Spot feature in the May Essex Bus Magazine, but in summary the changes are:

- Route numbers have been moved to the left-hand side of the display and are in a bolder font than before
- Prefix and suffix letters are shown at half the height of the number
- Shuttle services just show City Centre, Bus Station, Rail Station, Osborne St, without the town/city name
- More passing points are displayed than hitherto, with use of the H symbol against hospital names, and some abbreviations are used such as SHSB (for Southend High School for Boys)
- At least in the case of the 21 at Hadleigh depot, where there is a route variation (in this case on schooldays), the relevant passing point display is shown with the text reversed out of the background, to draw attention to it.



We're not sure if this applies more generally to routes that have variations within a single route number.

Destination displays are now programmed centrally at Head Office rather than depot by depot and this means all buses now carry the full company set, avoiding problems when buses are loaned or reallocated within Essex.

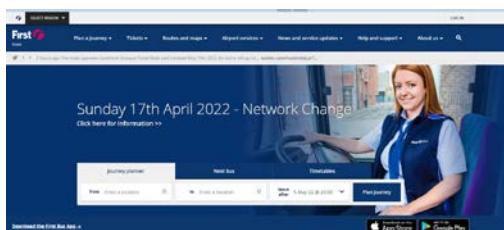
Publicity

The first public indication of the changes only appeared on-line on 10 April, just a week before they took effect, with information only available on-line at that stage. There was an area-by-area description of the changes and links to pdf timetables, although a few were missing (eg X10, X30). Leaflets were then available on buses introducing the shuttle concept but with scant detail - no start date, just part of the relevant map and no detail of the changes to routes, timetables and numbers. The leaflets invited you to "pick up a guide" but these weren't available until about a week or more after the changes took effect and in any event, only cover the shuttles. There does not yet appear to be any printed publicity available for the "green" routes, ie the inter-urban services and Southend area routes.

Maps of the town/city areas of Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester are available on-line as pdfs and printed copies were sometimes available as well. We've reproduced them in the relevant sections but shrinking them from A4 to A5 size for the magazine makes them somewhat unreadable. They only show the standard routings, not occasional variations (see other comments about these) and tendered services are not included even where operated by First. The maps use a selection of colours, with out-of-town services in green. It's unfortunate on the Chelmsford map that the routes to Beaulieu use three different shades of blue (for C9/10/11) with a fourth shade of blue for C12 to Springfield, making it particularly difficult to distinguish one from another in this busy corner of the Chelmsford map - contrasting colours would have been clearer.

On the web-site are pdf timetables to two distinctly different styles. Green routes have conventional timetable layouts but the red shuttles have a simplified format with key places across the top and times listed horizontally - see the examples inside the front cover. There are few locations listed on the latter, for example Basildon B2 fails to mention that it serves Langdon Hills (you can only tell that from the map) or that B2 buses serve the Hospital on leaving Basildon.

There was evidence of a last-minute rush, with various errors on the pdfs and even a couple of proof-reader comments left in! Currently as we write there are two versions of the pdfs on-line, those originally posted and linked from the dedicated page about the service changes and a second set accessed via the main timetable search (confusingly on the page titled route maps) which incorporate various corrections.



Commendably, real-time screens and many roadside timetables appeared to have been updated very quickly, at least from our random observations (but not in Braintree 4 weeks on), but route numbers on bus stop flags hadn't, as with this example in Chelmsford bus station seen on 19 April - by no means an isolated example, sadly. Only the 42A & 42B are correct, the other 4 routes listed no longer exist, indeed 33 & 36 extending to Broomfield refer to Sunday services which had ceased over two years ago. Flags are the responsibility of Essex CC to update. What should be listed for Stand 8 are C1, 70 & 370 plus the 42A/B - although the pdf timetables don't show stand numbers, creating further confusion for passengers. The Shuttles timetable books do however have a map/plan showing city centre stop details and stand numbers. In Chelmsford most services starting in the bus station and running via Duke Street railway bridge also no longer stop at the railway station (except for C7 & C9) but that's not obvious. Thankfully the more conventional timetables on the Essex CC site do show stand numbers (and reveal extra information, as explained below). By 8 May all the route numbers on the bus station flags had all been covered over but new ones hadn't been added.



The Essex County Council public transport site (<http://www.essexbus.info/>) has timetables for all services, in a conventional format and helpfully including more detail than First's, eg stand numbers and additional timing points. Presumably these timetables have been generated directly from First's electronic registration submissions (under the Bus Open Data Service regulations) so *should* be accurate. They revealed a number of omissions and discrepancies with First's pdfs and booklets, including route extensions not mentioned in First's publicity and only to be found through their journey planner. We've identified the following (some of which were later corrected):

- B2 Serves Basildon hospital towards Laindon on all trips (but not shown on the map or timetable)
- B3 The first two journeys from Pitsea M-S are extended on to/from Basildon hospital
- C1 Some mid/late evening journeys M-S extend beyond Broomfield hospital to/from Great Waltham
- C2 Early morning trips daily shown as starting at North Melbourne start back from Woodhall Estate
- C4 Here ECC fail to show that almost all journeys towards Writtle start back from the Retail Market
- C8 Sunday buses start from Chelmsford Rail Station, not Bus Station as listed in First publicity
- C10 Early morning trips starting at Channels do so from Albatross Way before Brassie Wood South
- C11 Evening journeys shown as terminating at North Springfield continue to/from Beaulieu Gardens
- S3 Off peak & evenings M-F and all day Sats, extends on from the High St to Osborne St
- S4 Evening journeys M-S start from High Street before Town station (later corrected)
- S6 Some journeys M-F eves, Sat early morning & early evening and all Sunday journeys extend on from the High St to Osborne St; the last evening journey M-S extends beyond Shrub End to/from Layer-de-la-Haye (the latter later corrected)
- S7 Certain evening trips and the whole Sunday service extends on from the High St to Osborne St
- S8 All Sunday trips start from Osborne St before High St
- S9 M-F off-peak and mid/late evenings and all Sundays, starts from Osborne St before High St
- S10 The original version of First's timetable omitted to say the service only runs in University term time
- 16 Here it appears that First's publicity is correct but ECC are not – ECC show a Sunday evening service that doesn't exist
- 20 The Sunday evening service from Southend is wrong, it is a repeat of the times for the opposite direction
- 42A The Sunday times from Chelmsford fail to show the service going via Stansted Airport
- 71/371 On Saturdays, towards Colchester, the two different timing points in Boreham are transposed
- 88 This pdf for the service which is joint with Heddingham Omnibuses includes all journeys including the extension of certain Heddingham operated journeys north of Halstead but two are wrongly shown. It also doesn't identify which trips are operated by Heddingham on whose buses Tap&Cap isn't available within Colchester
- 351 First's Sunday times are all one row out going towards Chelmsford, implying that there is a Sunday service from Warley - there isn't, buses start at Brentwood station then
- X30 There was no timetable on First's web site although the service continues unchanged (since corrected).

There were information points in Basildon, Chelmsford and Colchester shopping centres on Saturday 23 April but when we visited the Colchester one, there were no printed timetable booklets available, just the map. We have subsequently heard that timetable books for the shuttle networks in each of the three towns/cities have been published, but the Colchester one wasn't available on 5 May when we tried again (apparently it had errors and had to be reprinted). The booklets only cover the shuttle routes with no details for the longer distance routes. This is unfortunate in some cases where those services are an integral part of the town service, so for example the Basildon book doesn't show **any** buses to the hospital, nor any along Clay Hill Road (one of the prime east-west corridors, served by 22/28 every 10 minutes), and Whitmore Way has nearly half its buses missing as the 25 is not included. Likewise, the Chelmsford shuttle book doesn't show any service to the east side of Chelmer Village (71, 371) or some of the buses on Broomfield Road and to the hospital (70, 370). The in-town sections of those routes ought to have been included, surely?

Whilst route maps have been produced for the shuttle areas, there is no map yet for Southend/south-east Essex nor plans of towns like Brentwood, Braintree or Maldon to show the routes the services there follow.

Amazon contracts

Not connected with these changes (other than perhaps through the freeing up of staff resources), First took on two contracts to the Amazon warehouse at Tilbury from 17 April, the Z3 from Southend and Z4 from Pitsea, previously operated by SBC Leisure and Ensign respectively. The Z4 registration had switched to First from 18 March but was still operated by Ensign until 16 April; Z3 was previously an unregistered contract by SBC. We understand they are restricted to Amazon staff although publicity implies that these services are open to all passengers - full timetables are on First's web site with no qualification and they appear on the app - and they are registered as such, *not* as "school/works" services, so legally they should be open to the general public. Our attempt to use a Z3 was refused!

The previously Ensign-operated Z2 from Canning Town in East London is also now registered to First Essex but Ensign have continued to operate it on their behalf and we do not yet know when First will assume operation, for which a number of Euro VI compliant E400s have recently been transferred to Essex, required to comply with the London ultra-low emission zone requirements.

Conclusion

The changes are designed to reduce mileage/frequency to reflect more closely actual passenger numbers whilst at the same time trying to revitalise town/city networks by simplifying the offer and making those networks easier to market and hence build back patronage. Sadly, the impact has in many cases been simply to confuse existing passengers and make journeys more difficult for some. Simplification is in some cases an illusion, with routes using a single number for a variety of permutations. The overall saving in fleet/pvr is small, but an increasing number of buses are now only used in the peaks and mileage will have reduced more significantly than the pvr suggests.

It should be noted that First Essex were already facing significant challenges, having been loss making (at the net profit before tax level) in the financial years to March 2017 (-£0.5m), 2018 (-£3.3m) and 2020 (-£1.4m) and having only just broken even in 2019. Ironically, 2021 saw a return to decent profitability but that was anything but a normal year, so changes were to be expected even without the current challenges.

It is to be hoped that these radical changes will put the Essex network on a more stable footing and prove to be sustainable and that passenger numbers - especially concessions - will start to grow back towards the pre-pandemic levels. If not, we may yet face more radical changes.



Chelmsford Bus Station acts as a backdrop for 67162, an ADL E200MMC in the latest EssexBus green livery. Congestion in the bus station is a regular problem and the bus is circulating round to its correct stand for the renumbered 336 (ex 36) to South Woodham Ferrers. Most Chelmsford area interurban routes are now numbered in the 300 series. The bus had previously been used on the X10 service, Basildon to Stansted via Chelmsford, and has airport style luggage racking on the offside, meaning the seating capacity is only B36F in an 11.6m long bus. **Richard Delahoy**, 19 April.

Area by area

Here's our analysis of the new routes, area by area. For completeness, these listings show every First Essex route as at 17 April 2022.

The frequencies shown are intended as a general guide rather than a precise statement and the start/finish times vary from route to route and often between Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays. The same applies to the cut over point between daytime and evening frequencies, where the Saturday changeover is usually earlier than on M-F, sometimes appreciably so (for example, on 336, afternoon/evening departures from Chelmsford to South Woodham are: M-F 1625, 1710, 1740, 1825, 1925, 2040, 2140, 2240 but on Sats: 1640, 1840, 2040, 2140, 2240). Some routes also have peak hour enhancements.

Southend and South-East Essex

Richard Delahoy

There are relatively few changes in this area, with only one main route withdrawn (the 26, which has been part replaced by diverting First 21 and part by a new Stephensons route, 24A) and there are no shuttle type services, nor has tap & cap been introduced. There is also no local branding.

20	Southend Travel Centre - Hullbridge, Anchor					
via	Southend Hospital, Bridgewater Dr, Kent Elms Cnr, Eastwood Rise, Grove Rd, Bull Lane, Rayleigh town centre					
Replaces:	(existing service)					
Changes:	No change to route					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30/60 mins	Suns:	30 mins

21	Southend Travel Centre - Canvey Newlands					
via	Southend Hospital, Chalkwell Park, Leigh Church & Station, Hadleigh, A13, New Thundersley, Tarpots, Benfleet Station, Canvey Village					
Replaces:	Existing 21 and 21B, 822, plus the Southend to Hadleigh section of 26 (at a halved frequency)					
Changes:	Diverted via Westbourne/Southbourne Grove (not stopping in these roads), London Rd, Leigh Rd, Leigh Broadway, Leigh Station, Thames Drive - instead of Kenilworth Gardens, Blenheim Chase, Elmsleigh Dr, Hadleigh Road. Diverted direct via A13 instead of A129, Hart Rd, Kenneth Rd (no longer serving Thundersley Village). Morrisons on Canvey only served off peak M-S. Former evening 21B routing via Manchester Drive withdrawn - all trips via standard 21 route. School time trips run via old route (Kenilworth Gardens, Blenheim Chase, Elmsleigh Dr)					
Frequency change	Unchanged (26 section reduced compared to old 26). Leigh Road/Broadway gain Eves & Suns service					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	hourly	Suns:	hourly



On Easter Sunday, 17 April, operating the first journey on re-routed service 21 in Southend, StreetLite 47528 heads up Westbourne Grove and crosses Westborough Road. At the top it will turn right onto London Road at Chalkwell Park. This new routing (return via Southbourne Grove) is to enable buses to serve the hospital section of 21 and then cover the withdrawn service 26 along Leigh Road and Broadway and provides a new direct link from Leigh Road to the hospital.

Richard Delahoy

22	Canvey, Leigh Beck - Basildon Bus Station					
via	Haystack, Link Rd, Benfleet Station, Tarpots, Pitsea Broadway, Clay Hill Rd					
Replaces:	(existing service)					
Changes:	No change to route					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	No service after mid-evening	Suns:	30 mins

25, 825	Southend Travel Centre - Basildon Bus Station					
via	Southend Hospital, Prince Ave, Kent Elms Cnr, Eastwood Rise, Rayleigh town centre, Little Wheatleys, Shotgate, Wickford town centre, Whitmore Way. 825 school variation via Westcliff High Schools not Prince Ave. See also 725 listed under school services.					
Replaces:	(existing service)					
Changes:	Withdrawn between Basildon Bus Stn and Hospital (had served that section Sundays only) except for 1 journey					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	No service after mid-evening	Suns:	30 mins

27, 27A, 827	Southend Travel Centre - Canvey Leigh Beck					
via	A13 (Westcliff, Leigh, Hadleigh), Kents Hill Road, Benfleet Station, Link Road, Haystack; 27A via Tarpots not Kents Hill Rd; only applies to Sunday evening trips; 827 from Canvey to Leigh Elms as normal then Blenheim Chase, Westcliff St Thomas More school, Prittlewell Chase, Victoria Ave.					
Replaces:	Existing service; 27X peak-hour variant withdrawn					
Changes:	Peak hour trips Canvey - Benfleet station - Hadleigh direct via Central Wall Rd previously numbered 27X replaced by trips to normal route at an increased frequency. 827 extended from Thomas More school to Southend. First publicity also states it is altered to call at all bus stops but previous publicity had not listed any restrictions on travel so we don't know if this is revision or not!					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins plus peak shorts	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins

28	Southend Travel Centre - Basildon Bus Station					
via	A13 (Westcliff, Leigh, Hadleigh, Benfleet Tarpots), Pitsea Broadway, Clay Hill Rd					
Replaces:	(existing service)					
Changes:	No change to route					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; evening service introduced M-S; no change Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins

Hadleigh, which operates all the Southend area routes except 25 & X30, is the only depot that doesn't operate shuttle routes and hence doesn't need buses in the red livery. There are only four buses in the fleet currently in red, transferred from Southampton in those colours, however very shortly before the new shuttle routes were launched, 2 of them were transferred from Colchester (which does need red liveried buses) to Hadleigh and the other 2 followed later in April, to standardise engine types at depots - HH is now all-Cummins for its StreetLite fleet (and Colchester similarly all-Daimler). At least they look at home alongside the two deckers in Westcliff Motor Services heritage red liveries! 63064 was seen near the Leigh Beck terminus on Canvey on Easter Sunday, 17 April, heading for Southend. They also appear in Basildon on "green" routes 22 & 28. **Matthew Evans**



Revised routes and renumbering - cross-reference table:

Previous number	Serving	New route
5	The Knares, Laindon, Langdon Hills	B2
5/5A/5B	Whitmore Way, Felmores, Pitsea	B3
5A/5B	Corringham, Orsett, Grays	200
8/8A	Laindon Station, Durham Rd, Southfields	B1
8/8A	Laindon Station, King Edward Rd, Southfields	B2
8/8A	Long Riding, Sandon Rd, Pitsea	B5
8/8A	Long Riding, Wickford Ave, Pitsea	B4
100	Basildon to Chelmsford	300



B1	Basildon Bus Station – Laindon Southfields Fenton Way					
via	Great Knightleys, Tyler Avenue, Laindon Rail Station, Durham Road					
Replaces:	Basildon to Laindon Southfields via Durham Rd section of services 8/A					
Changes:	No change to route but Basildon to Pitsea section of service 8 transferred to new services B4 & B5					
Frequency change	Frequency increase west of Laindon station but reduced on Great Knightleys					
Standard headway	M-S day:	12 mins	M-S evenings:	15 mins until 1900 then every 30 mins	Suns:	20 mins until 1600 then every 30 mins until 1900, then hourly

B2	Basildon Bus Station – Laindon Southfields Fenton Way					
via	Hospital (westbound only), The Knares, Langdon Hills, Laindon Rail Station, High Rd, King Edward Rd, Victoria Rd					
Replaces:	Basildon to Langdon Hills section of service 5 & Basildon to Laindon Southfields via King Edward Rd section of services 8/8A					
Changes:	Diverted via The Knares to replace service 5, but Basildon to Pitsea section of service 8A transferred to new services B4 & B5. Now runs via Staneway direct from Langdon Hills to Basildon.					
Frequency change	Reduced frequency for Laindon area from every 10 or 20 mins to half-hourly but no change for Langdon Hills which gains a Sunday service.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	60 mins	Suns:	60 mins

B3	Basildon Bus Station – Pitsea Tesco (2 early trips M-S start from/extend to Basildon Hospital, not advertised)					
via	Whitmore Way, Felmores, Rectory Road, Pitsea Broadway					
Replaces:	Basildon to Pitsea section of services 5/5A/5B					
Changes:	No change to route but Basildon to Laindon/Grays section of services 5/5A/5B transferred to new B2 & 200.					
Frequency change	Core frequency remains every 15 minutes; improved late evening & Sunday timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	12 mins morning peak then every 15 mins	M-S evenings:	20 mins until 2100 then every 30 mins	Suns:	20 mins, then 30 mins from 1430, hourly from 1800

B4	Basildon Bus Station – Pitsea Tesco					
via	Long Riding, Broadmayne, Pitsea Road, Wickford Avenue, Pitsea Broadway					
Replaces:	Basildon to Pitsea section of services 8/8A					
Changes:	New terminus at Pitsea Tesco no change to route but Basildon to Laindon section replaced by new services B1 & B2					
Frequency change	Improved evening & Sunday frequency					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins then 60 mins from 1720

B5	Basildon Bus Station – Pitsea Broadway					
via	Long Riding, Luncies Road, Sandon Road, High Road					
Replaces:	Basildon to Pitsea section services 8/8A					
Changes:	No route changes but Basildon to Laindon section replaced by new services B1 & B2					
Frequency change	Improved evening & Sunday frequency					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins then 60 mins from 1720

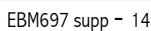
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12



21 70 100 331 332 336 351 370 371 371



10 30



Revised routes and renumbering - cross-reference table:

Previous number	Serving	New route	
40	Boreham	71	
40	Channels	C10	
40	Chelmer Village	C12	
42	Broomfield Hospital; Galleywood	C1	
45/45A/45C	Moulsham Lodge	C5	
45/45A/45C	Writtle, Oxney Green	C4	
51	Great Baddow & BAE Systems	C6	
54/54A/54B	North Melbourne, Broomfield Hospital	C2	
54/54A/54B	Springfield, Beaulieu Park	C8	
56/56A	North Melbourne	C3	Other renumberings:
56/56A	Springfield, Beaulieu Park	C11	Part 31 to 331; 31B/C/D to 332
57	Beaulieu	C9, C10	36 to 336
57 group	Great Baddow, Galleywood	C7 (C56, 57 eves)	70 to 370, 70A to 70
100	Basilidon to Chelmsford	300	Part 71 to 371; 71A to 371



C1	Galleywood Barnard Road - Broomfield Hospital (some trips extended to Gt Waltham Warners Farm mid/late evening M-S)				
via	Tile Kiln, City Centre, Bus Station, Broomfield Road. Continues to operate a one-way loop in Galleywood				
Replaces:	42 (plus section of route between Galleywood and Bus Station on Sunday 42A/B)				
Changes:	None				
Frequency change	None (other than Sundays, where with 42A/B still running, there is an effective increase to 3 buses/hour between Broomfield Hospital & the Bus Station)				
Standard headway	M-S day:	15 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns: 30 minutes, not eves (1 late trip only)

C2	Chelmsford Retail Market - Broomfield Hospital				
via	North Avenue, Trent Road, North Melbourne, Woodhall Estate. Towards city serves Rail Station then Retail Market then Bus Station (early/late journeys M-S run direct to/from Bus Station)				
Replaces:	54/A section between Broomfield Hospital and Chelmsford Bus Station				
Changes:	Section of route Chelmsford – Beaulieu Park replaced by C8				
Frequency change	None				
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns: 30 minutes (eves term. N Melbourne)

C3	Chelmsford Bus Station (returns to Railway Station) - North Melbourne, Wickfield Ash				
via	Swiss Avenue, Langton Avenue, Melbourne Avenue				
Replaces:	56/A section Bus Station - North Melbourne				
Changes:	Section of route Chelmsford - North Springfield replaced by C11				
Frequency change	Reduced from every 20 to every 30 minutes				
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 minutes	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns: Hourly, not eves

C4	Chelmsford Bus Station - Writtle Lodge Road (most return journeys start at Retail Market)				
via	Westlands Estate, one-way loop in Writtle				
Replaces:	45 section between Bus Station and Writtle (daily), on Sundays also replaces this section of 45A.				
Changes:	Section of route Chelmsford – Moulsham Lodge replaced by C5. Sunday 45A section between Bus Station and Chelmer Village not replaced (covered by existing 71/371).				
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su				
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 minutes	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns: Hourly

C5	Chelmsford Railway Station (returns to Bus Station) - Moulsham Lodge Estate Heath Drive					
via	Gunson Gate, Gloucester Ave (occasional service via Baddow Road and Beehive Lane, see below)					
Replaces:	45 between city centre and Moulsham Lodge Estate					
Changes:	Route via Baddow Road and Beehive Lane withdrawn (apart from one morning and two afternoon journeys each way, M-F). Section of route Chelmsford - Writtle Lodge Road replaced by C4.					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 15 mins to every 20 mins M-F days; no change S/Su					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 minutes	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns:	Hourly

C6	Chelmsford Bus Station - Gt Baddow BAE Systems					
via	Beehive Lane, Readers Corner, Vineyards then one-way loop to BAE Systems					
Replaces:	51					
Changes:	Rerouted via Baddow Road and Beehive Lane, withdrawn from Old Moulsham and Gunson Gate					
Frequency change	None					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly between peaks only	M-S evenings:	None	Suns:	None

C7, C56, C57	Chelmsford Bus Station - Galleywood Keene Hall					
via	Meadgate Avenue, Gt Baddow Vineyards, Dorset Ave, one-way loop in Galleywood C56: is a solitary Sunday late evening trip ex Chelmsford via Gunson Gate, Moulsham Lodge (double run), Beehive Lane, not Gt Baddow C57: runs 2/3 times evenings only, as C7 but not serving Meadgate Ave We think C56/7 denote tendered journeys, hence the specific route numbers.					
Replaces:	57/A/B/C section between Bus Station and Galleywood					
Changes:	Section of route Bus Station – Beaulieu replaced by C9					
Frequency change	Reduced from 20 minutes to 30 minutes, with peak enhancement M-F					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins plus peak extras	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns:	Hourly

C8	Chelmsford Bus Station - Beaulieu Park					
via	Springfield Rd, Springfield Green, North Springfield (peak journeys towards the city run direct via Victoria Rd, not Parkway)					
Replaces:	54/A section between Bus Station and Beaulieu Park					
Changes:	Section of route Chelmsford - Broomfield Hospital replaced by C2					
Frequency change	None					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 minutes	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns:	Hourly

C9	Chelmsford Bus Station - Beaulieu Park					
via	Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmer Valley Rd, then one way loop via Regiment Gate, Beaulieu Park, New Nabbotts Way, Pump Lane (North Springfield) Daily off-peak enters city via Springfield Rd, Parkway, Retail Market not direct via Victoria Rd					
Replaces:	57/A/C section between Bus Station and Beaulieu Park					
Changes:	Section of route Chelmsford - Galleywood replaced by C7					
Frequency change	None					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins M-F, 30 mins Sat	M-S evenings:	30 minutes	Suns:	Hourly

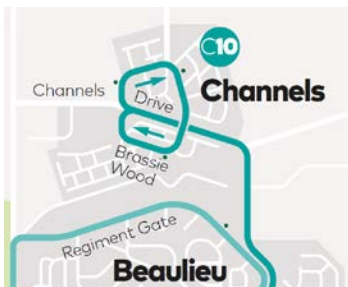
C10	Chelmsford Bus Station - Channels, Brassie Wood					
via	Broomfield Road, North Springfield, Beaulieu Park Buses towards city operate a city centre loop via the Railway station, Tindal St, Parkway (Mildmay car park stop), Retail Market then Bus station (not early/late trips)					
Replaces:	40 (Bus Station to Channels section)					
Changes:	Rerouted from Essex Regiment Way to serve North Springfield					
Frequency change	M-F daytime increased to every 20 mins (prev. 30). Sunday service to Channels introduced.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 min M-F, 30 min Sat	M-S evenings:	30 minutes	Suns:	Hourly

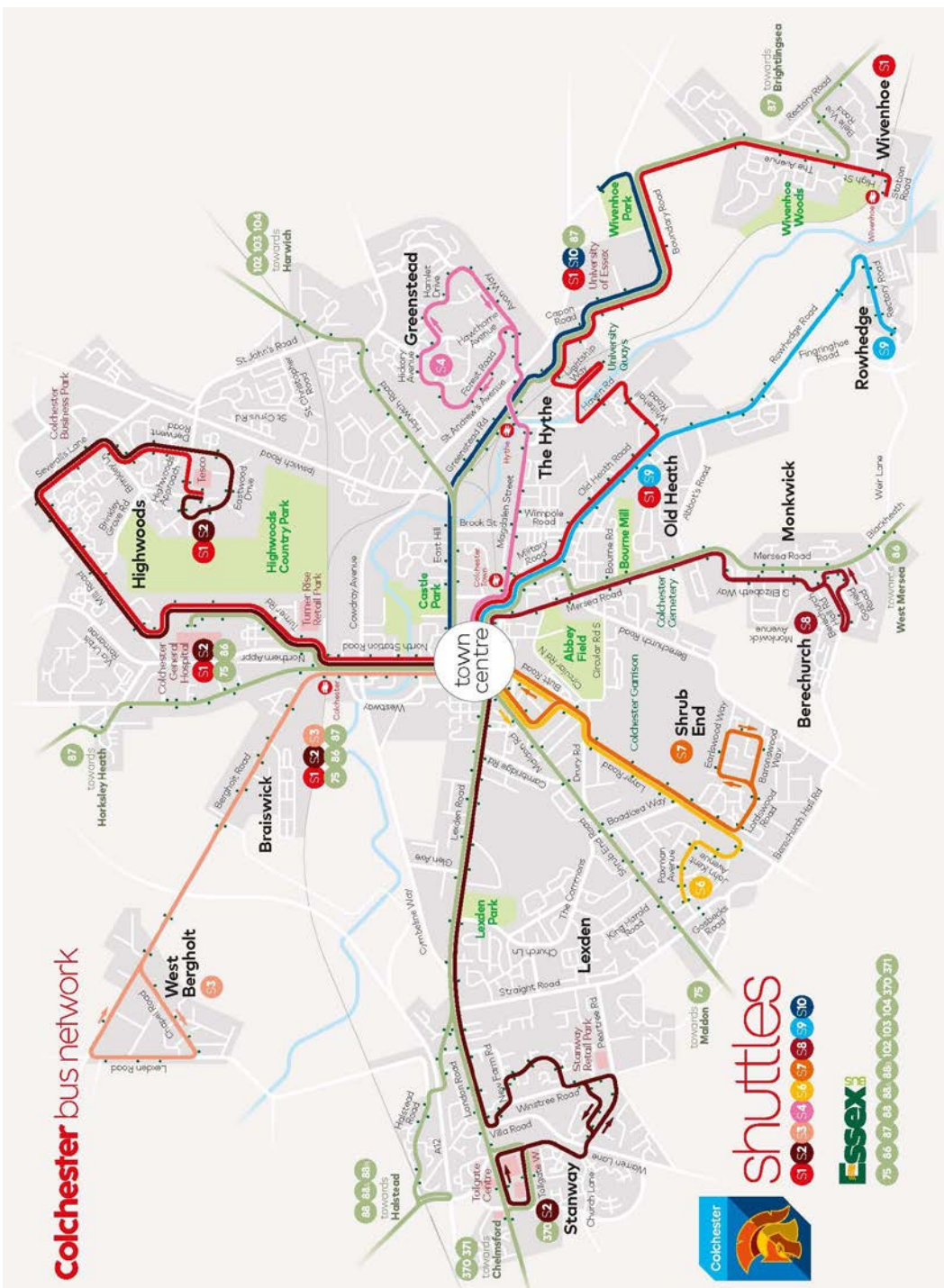
C11	Chelmsford Rail Station - Springfield Sainsburys					
via	Springfield Road, Waveney Drive, North Springfield (morning peak journeys towards the city run direct via Victoria Rd, not Parkway) Section North Springfield to Sainsburys not served early morning or evenings, instead turns at Beaulieu Gardens					
Replaces:	56/A section between Rail Station and Beaulieu Park					
Changes:	Most journeys extended from North Springfield to Springfield Sainsbury. Section of route Chelmsford - North Melbourne Wickfield Ash replaced by C3.					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 minutes	M-S evenings:	30 minutes / Hourly	Suns:	Hourly

C12	Chelmsford Bus Station – Springfield Sainsburys					
via	Parkway, Chelmer Village (Beeleigh Link)					
Replaces:	Chelmsford to Springfield section of 40					
Changes:	Section of route Springfield Sainsburys to Boreham withdrawn. Mainly covered by 71 and 371.					
Frequency change	None					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 minutes	M-S evenings:	30 minutes / Hourly	Suns:	No service



There is a massive amount of new housing development to the north-east of Chelmsford. Beaulieu is well established but still growing and has been joined by the Channels development. Service C10 has replaced the 40 here and follows a slightly confusing route as shown on the map extract: buses come up the central spine road, turn right to loop round Albatross Way/Belfry Crescent, then cross the spine road on a bus only traffic light controlled crossing to the south side of the development, Brassie Wood, to stand, where **Richard Delahoy's** picture of a rather dirty E200 44550 was taken on 19 April. The bus then proceeds north to the spine road and back towards Chelmsford. It's understood that there will be further changes to the route here later in the year as more houses are built.





Revised routes and renumbering - cross-reference table:

Previous number	Serving	New route	
61	Highwoods; Wivenhoe	S1	
62B	University of Essex	S10	
62	Brightlingsea	87	
64	Layer Rd, Shrub End	S6	
64A	Layer Rd, St Michaels	S7	
64/64A	Greenstead	S4	
65	Highwoods; Lexden Rd, Stanway	S2	
66	Rowhedge	S9	
66	West Bergholt	S3	
67/67B/67C	Mersea Rd, Lethe Grove, Monkwick	S8	Other renumberings:
67/67B/67C	Mersea Rd, West Mersea	86	70 to 370; 71 to 371



S1	Colchester Highwoods Tesco - Wivenhoe Rail Station					
via	Highwoods Approach, Mill Rd, Colchester General Hospital, Turner Rd, Colchester Rail Station, High St, Military Rd, Old Heath Rd, Whitehall Rd, University Quays, University of Essex, Wivenhoe The Avenue.					
Replaces:	61					
Changes:	No change to route					
Frequency change	M-S day 15 mins to 20 mins. M-S Evenings and Sundays no change. M-S Evenings continues to reduce to 60 mins late evenings.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins

S2	Colchester Highwoods Tesco - Colchester Stanway Sainsburys					
via	Eastwood Drive, Mill Rd, Colchester General Hospital, Turner Rd, Colchester Rail Station, High St, Osborne St, Lexden Rd, Wheatfield Rd, Tollgate Rd.					
Replaces:	65					
Changes:	No change to route					
Frequency change	M-S day 15 mins to 20 mins. M-S evenings and Sundays no change. M-S Evenings continues to reduce to 60 mins late evenings.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins

S3	Colchester Osborne Street - West Bergholt Queens Head					
via	Colchester Rail Station, Bergholt Road, Braiswick, Colchester Road, Chapel Road. Serves rail station forecourt on Sundays, on other days only uses Station Way laybys					
Replaces:	66 between Colchester Osborne Street and West Bergholt Queens Head.					
Changes:	No change to route (Rowhedge section of route 66 replaced by S9)					
Frequency change	M-S day 30 min to 60 mins. M-S evenings and Suns no change.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	60 mins	M-S evenings:	60 mins	Suns:	90 mins

S4	Colchester Osborne Street - Greenstead Library					
via	High Street, Magdalen Street, Hythe, Avon Way, then clockwise loop via Hawthorn Avenue, Forest Road, Greenstead Library, Magnolia Drive, Hamlet Drive.					
Replaces:	64/64A between Colchester Head Street and Greenstead Library.					
Changes:	64/64A had clockwise/anti-clockwise loops in Greenstead. S4 has clockwise loop only.					
Frequency change	64/64A combined 10 mins M-S day, reduced to 12 mins M-S day. M-S evenings and Suns no change. Suns 20 mins still reduces to 30 mins early evening. M-S, later evening journeys start from the High St, not Osborne St.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	12 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	20/30 mins

S6	Colchester Osborne Street - Shrub End Hazell Avenue (last trip extends M-S to Layer-de-la-Haye)					
via	Maldon Road, Butt Road, Layer Road, John Kent Avenue, Paxman Avenue.					
Replaces:	64 between Colchester Osborne Street and Shrub End Hazell Avenue.					
Changes:	No change to route (Greenstead section of route replaced by S4).					
Frequency change	M-S day 20 mins to 30 mins. M-S evenings no change. Suns 40 mins to 60 mins.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	60 mins	Suns:	60 mins

S7	Colchester Osborne Street - St Michaels Baronswood Way					
via	Maldon Road, Butt Road, Layer Road, Lordswood Road, Earlswood Way.					
Replaces:	64A between Colchester Osborne Street and St Michaels Baronswood Way.					
Changes:	No change to route (Greenstead section of route replaced by S4)					
Frequency change	M-S day 20 mins to 30 mins. M-S evenings no change. Suns 40 mins to 60 mins.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	60 mins	Suns:	60 mins

S8	Colchester High Street - Monkwick Gosfield Road					
via	Mersea Road, Queen Elizabeth Way, Monkwick Avenue, then anti-clockwise loop via Berechurch Hall Road (double run to Lethe Grove), Wethersfield Road, Gosfield Road.					
Replaces:	New/Replacing part of 67 (M-S day), 67B (Suns). See also new service 86.					
Changes:	New route serving Monkwick.					
Frequency change	M-F morning peak improved. M-S day increased from 30 mins to 15 mins. Suns increased from 2 hourly to 30 mins (all as compared to former 67).					
Standard headway	M-S day:	15 mins	M-S evenings:	No service, see 68	Suns:	30 mins

S9	Colchester High Street - Rowhedge Rectory Road					
via	Military Road, Old Heath Road, Old Heath, Rowhedge Road.					
Replaces:	66 between Colchester High Street and Rowhedge Rectory Road.					
Changes:	M-S evenings short workings to Old Heath Speedwell Road withdrawn.					
Frequency change	M-S day 30 mins to 60 mins. M-S evenings and Suns unchanged.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	60 mins	M-S evenings:	60 mins	Suns:	90 mins

S10	Colchester Osborne Street - FMason Wivenhoe Park					
via	East Hill, Greenstead Road, University of Essex, Boundary Road.					
Replaces:	62B Colchester High Street – University of Essex.					
Changes:	Diverted via East Hill and Greenstead Road instead of Magdalen Street. Extended from University of Essex to Wivenhoe Park.					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 20 mins to every 30 mins M-F days; no change S/Su. Like 62B, S10 operates during University of Essex term times only .					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	No service see 87	Suns:	hourly



On 19 April **Robert Appleton** saw 63063 in Colchester Osborne Street on the new S2, which is the renumbered 65. It carries the red livery from its time working in Southampton, a modified version of this livery is to be used on the buses in the Shuttle brand with appropriate lettering and three yellow dividing lines (as used in the green livery) - although the following day, this bus was transferred to Hadleigh, the only "all-green" depot.

Interurban routes

Editorial team

This section covers all commercial routes not covered by the Shuttle and **airlink** brands. Primarily the routes are interurban but it also includes the Brentwood town service (since that doesn't fit anywhere else!). Some services have journeys supported by Essex CC, usually evenings and/or Sundays but this is not specifically noted here. Fully supported (tendered) services are listed further on.

The Southend/Rayleigh/Canvey/Basildon services are covered separately above, although they are also effectively interurban in nature.

9	Basildon Bus Station – Brentwood Rail Station					
via	Great Knightleys, Laindon Centre, Billericay, Hutton					
Replaces:	Existing 9					
Changes:	No route changes (NB: the peak hours 9A which ceased in March 2020 has not been reinstated)					
Frequency change	Halved to hourly with extra peak hour journeys Mon to Fri					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly plus peak extras	M-S evenings:	No Service	Suns:	No Service

31, 331, 332	31/331 Chelmsford Bus station - Burnham on Crouch, Clock Tower 332 Chelmsford Bus station - Steeple/Burnham on Crouch					
via	Gt Baddow* (see below), Danbury, Maldon, Latchingdon, Althorne, Southminster 332 as above to Latchingdon, then Maylandsea, Mayland, Steeple, Southminster					
Replaces:	31, 31B, 31C, 31D, 31X					
Changes:	Complicated! In effect, 31B replaced by 331; 31C & 31D replaced by 332; 31 & 31X combined into 31. To try to explain and summarise what is an incredibly confusing combined timetable: - 31 refers to journeys which run via Milton Rd in Maldon or which terminate there M-S daytimes. Some 31s serve Great Baddow (generally off-peak/some evening journeys M-F, all day Saturday with a few exceptions, but not Suns except last bus from Chelmsford), whilst all other 31s use the by-pass. - 331 refers to journeys which omit Milton Road in Maldon; all 331s run the full length of the route and all use Baddow by-pass; 331 mostly only runs off-peak M-S. - 332 is for journeys which run via Mayland etc, consisting M-F of one am peak trip in, two pm peak back, starting/terminating at Steeple, one similarly timed trip each way on Sats (continuing to/from Burnham), and the whole Sunday service (also to/from Burnham), except that the last Sunday trips run as 31. M-S all 332s use Baddow by-pass, Suns all run via Great Baddow. One Sunday trip terminates at Southminster station. * Summarising buses which serve Great Baddow, this is about a third of the service M-F, half on Saturdays and almost all on Suns. M-F there are huge gaps, 1435 to 2053 towards Chelmsford, 1421 to 1850 towards Maldon.					
Frequency change	Maldon – Burnham section now hourly, was every 30 minutes					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Combined 30 min to Maldon, hourly beyond	M-S evenings:	hourly	Suns:	2-hourly

35	Debden Broadway - Chelmsford Retail Market					
via	Loughton, Epping, North Weald, Ongar, Kelvedon Hatch, Wyatts Green, Mountnessing					
Changes:	From Ongar now operates as shown above rather than direct to Chelmsford along the A414, slightly retimed					
Frequency change	No change					
Standard headway	One journey each way on Tuesdays when Debden Park High Sch is open (this is a shopper bus, not schools)					

37	Warley, Eagle Way - Pilgrims Hatch, Danes Way					
via	Brentwood Station, Brentwood Town Centre, Doddington Road, Bishops Hall Estate. Warley only served M-F peaks and by alternate journeys off-peak M-F (every hour Sats), at other times buses turn at Brentwood station.					
Replaces:	Unchanged					
Changes:	No change					
Frequency change	Unchanged.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	15 mins	M-S evenings:	20 minutes	Suns:	2-hourly

42A, 42B		Chelmsford Bus station - Bishops Stortford (42A) or Halstead Colne Road (42B)					
via	Broomfield Hospital then: 42A - Gt Waltham, Gt Dunmow, Takeley, Stansted Airport; M-F morning 42A trip extends to Princes Rd in Chelmsford 42B - Lt Waltham, Gt Leighs, Braintree.						
Replaces:	No change						
Changes:	Sunday section of route from Chelmsford Bus Station to Galleywood withdrawn (C1 covers).						
Frequency change	None. NB: Apart from isolated journeys M-F on 42A, only runs eves/Suns, under ECC contract then						
Standard headway	M-S day:	42A one journey each way, to/from Takeley	M-S evenings:	42B only, 2/3 trips	Suns:	Both 2-hourly	

70, 370	Chelmsford* - Braintree Bus Interchange (70 terminates), Colchester Bus Station (370)					
via	Broomfield Hospital, Gt Notley, Braintree Rayne Rd (70) or London Rd (370), Coggeshall, Marks Tey					
Replaces:	370 replaces the through Chelmsford - Colchester service, previously 70; 70 replaces Chelmsford to Braintree shorts via Rayne Road, previously 70A * In Chelmsford, 370 runs directly to/from the Bus Station; the 70 journeys however operate a city centre loop via the Railway station (with layover time), Tindal St, Parkway (Mildmay car park stop), Retail Market then Bus station. The city loop applies M-S, except evenings when 70 runs direct to the Bus station.					
Changes:	None (except change of route numbers)					
Frequency change		Reduced from half hourly to hourly on both services (combined now half-hourly Chelmsford - Braintree, previously every 15 minutes)				
Standard headway	M-S day:	Combined 30 min Chelmsford to Braintree, hourly to Colchester	M-S evenings:	Limited service (370) plus 42B	Suns:	2-hourly (370) plus 42B.



66813 has just arrived at Chelmsford Rail Station from Braintree on the 70 but already displays its return destination. It will take a five-minute stand here before making a loop of the City Centre, via Duke Street, New London Road, Parkway (double run), Retail Market, passing the rail station again in the opposite direction to stand 8 at the Bus Station and back to Braintree. This loop operation pre-dates the latest service revisions. C10 similarly loops round the city. Photo by **Richard Delahoy**, 19 April. The bus is a Volvo B7RLE/Wrights; it started life working for First in Manchester.

71, 371, X71		Chelmsford Bus Station - Witham Morrisons (71), Colchester Bus Station (371, X71)				
via	Chelmer Village Way, Boreham, Hatfield Peverel, Witham, Kelvedon, Marks Tey. In Boreham, 71 serves Plantation Road, Church Rd; 371 runs direct along Main Rd (B1137) - except for odd evening 371s M-F that go via the 71 route. X71 runs direct via A12, not serving Boreham, Hatfield Peverel and via A12 not Kelvedon. Occasional journeys only M-F & Sun. 71 only runs between Chelmsford and Witham, terminating or starting in Witham variously at Morrisons (most journeys), Freebourne Rd, Crittall Rd or Lynfield Motors (A12 southern junction). In Chelmsford, 71 runs to the Bus Station via Victoria Rd South whereas 371 diverts via Parkway, Rainsford Road/ Coval Lane to avoid the Duke St railway bridge (and hence allow double deck operation).					
Replaces:	40 (Chelmsford to Boreham section), 71, 71A, 71B, 71C, 71D, 71X, 72 and the Sunday section of 45A between Chelmsford and Chelmer Village					
Changes:	Effectively there is a simplification of the previous pattern, to give more consistent routings, although evening 371s follow the 71 route in Boreham via Plantation Road on M-S evenings (being the ECC supported journeys previously numbered 71A - although looking at tracking, it seems some drivers stick to the normal 371 route!). The standard pattern is therefore: - an hourly (single deck) 71 leaving Chelmsford under the railway bridge and diverting off Main Rd in Boreham to serve Plantation Rd, terminating in Witham where they extend beyond the former route, via Collingwood Rd and Witham station, to Morrisons; and - an hourly (single or double deck) 371 using Parkway to avoid the railway bridge, running direct on Main Rd in Boreham (except M-S evenings) and through to Colchester.					
Frequency change		Chelmsford - Boreham corridor reduced from 4 buses/hour to 2; Witham retains 2 buses/hour; onwards to Colchester reduced from every 30 mins to hourly. Sunday service Chelmsford to Witham increased to hourly.				
Standard headway	M-S day:	Combined 30 min Chelmsford to Witham, hourly to Colchester	M-S evenings:	2-hourly through buses plus short workings at each end	Suns:	Combined hourly Chelmsford to Witham, 2-hourly to Colchester

75	Colchester General Hospital - Maldon Morrisons					
via	Colchester Rail Station, Osborne Street, Maldon Road, Colchester Zoo, Tiptree, Heybridge, Maldon Tesco, Maldon High Street, Maldon Leisure Centre.					
Replaces:	75 Colchester Osborne Street – Maldon Morrisons, 75A Colchester Osborne Street – Tiptree New Times.					
Changes:	Most M-S journeys extended in Colchester to/from the General Hospital. 75A withdrawn (although one journey still runs via the old 75A route, the 1535 ex Colchester M-F). M-F peak journeys that had run via Milton Rd in Maldon now follow normal route.					
Frequency change	M-S day 75A withdrawn, so Colchester – Tiptree frequency reduced from half-hourly to hourly.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	hourly	M-S evenings:	hourly	Suns:	2-hourly

86	Colchester General Hospital - West Mersea High Street						
via	Colchester Rail Station, High St, Military Rd, Roberts Rd, Mersea Rd, Blackheath.						
Replaces:	67 Colchester Osborne St – West Mersea (M-S), 67B Colchester Mason Rd – West Mersea (Suns), 67C Colchester Norman Way Schools – West Mersea (Schooldays).						
Changes:	M-S in Colchester uses Military Rd and Roberts Rd instead of the northern part of Mersea Rd. Omits Monkwick to give faster journey times. Monkwick estates now served by new S8. M-S peak hour journeys start/finish at Osborne St. Suns to/from Colchester Mason Rd via Cowdray Ave instead of Rail Station and General Hospital, route unchanged but renumbered from 67B. On Suns also double runs via Lethe Grove and serves Monkwick Silver Oyster. Schooldays one trip runs to/from Norman Way Schools instead of Rail Station and General Hospital, route unchanged but renumbered from 67C.						
Frequency change		M-S day reduced from half-hourly to hourly.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	hourly	M-S evenings:	no service, see 68	Suns:	2-hourly	

87	Great Horkesley Malvern Way - Brightlingsea Victoria Place					
via	Nayland Road, Mile End Road, Colchester Rail Station, High Street, East Hill, Greenstead Road, University of Essex, Wivenhoe, Alresford, Thorrington. In Wivenhoe, terminating journeys run via Rectory Rd, Belle Vue Rd.					
Replaces:	62 Colchester Rail Station – Brightlingsea (M-S day/M-S evenings/Suns) 62B Colchester High Street – Wivenhoe (M-S evenings).					
Changes:	Extended from Colchester Rail Station to Great Horkesley Malvern Way. 62B via Magdalen Street (M-S evenings) replaced by 87 via East Hill, Greenstead Road.					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 20 mins to every 30 mins M-F days; no change S. 62/62B was M-S evenings 30 mins to Wivenhoe, hourly to Brightlingsea, this frequency retained by 87. Suns was M-S evenings 30 mins to Wivenhoe, hourly to Brightlingsea, now hourly over whole route. See S10 for additional service to University of Essex in term time.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins/hourly	Suns:	hourly

88, 88A, 88B	Colchester Osborne Street - Halstead Conies Road					
via	88: Lexden, Eight Ash Green, Wakes Colne, Earls Colne, Halstead High Street. 88A: also serves Aldham. Not serving Ronald Rd in Halstead 88B: also serves Fordham.					
Replaces:	None.					
Changes:	None. Continues to be operated jointly with Hedingham Omnibuses (who have journeys extending north beyond Halstead M-S). First operate about 56%-57% of the service M-S and all of the Sunday service.					
Frequency change	None.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	60 mins	M-S evenings:	2-hourly	Suns:	2-hourly

100	Basildon Bus Station - Lakeside					
via	Basildon Hospital, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Grays					
Replaces:	100 (South)					
Changes:	No Changes					
Frequency change	No Change					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins, no evening service

102/3/4	Colchester Stanwell Street - Harwich Town Rail Station					
via	104: High Street, East Hill, Harwich Road, Ardleigh, Lawford, Manningtree, Mistley, Bradfield, Wix, Great Oakley, Little Oakley, Dovercourt. 103: serves Wrabness Harwich Road, Ramsey, Dovercourt Long Meadows, instead of Wix, Great Oakley, Little Oakley. 102: as 104 also serves Dedham and Parkeston, M-S evenings and Suns.					
Replaces:	None.					
Changes:	Minor changes only on M-F: 09.20 Mistley – Colchester 103 advanced by 5 mins, renumbered 104. 14.35 Colchester - Harwich 104 diverted via Dovercourt Low Road Corner. 16.05 Harwich - Colchester 104 retarded by 5 mins 18.35 Colchester - Harwich 103 now 104.					
Frequency change	None.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	60 mins	M-S evenings:	Irregular	Suns:	2-hourly

200	Basildon Bus Station - Grays Bus Station					
via	Basildon Hospital, Homesteads, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Orsett Hospital, Palmers College					
Replaces:	Existing 5A/5B between Basildon & Grays. College service 5X Wickford to Palmers College withdrawn.					
Changes:	Diverted in Corringham from Southend Road into Springhouse Road to serve Corringham Town Centre, continuing along Abbots Drive. All journeys now operate via Orsett Hospital.					
Frequency change	Halved to hourly with extra journeys at busiest times.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly plus peak extras	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

300	Basildon Bus Station to Chelmsford Bus Station					
via	Noak Bridge, Great Burstead, Billericay, Stock, Galleywood					
Replaces:	100 (North)					
Changes:	Service renumbered					
Frequency change	No change					
Standard headway	M-S day:	20 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins, no evening service

331, 332 - see 31

336	Chelmsford Bus Station - South Woodham Ferrers Asda					
via	Gt Baddow, Danbury, Bicknacre, SWF Station, Broughton Rd					
Replaces:	36, 36A, 36B, 36X					
Changes:	36A via Gandalfs Ride SWF, 36B via Gt Baddow by pass, and 36X (schooldays am peak from SWF via A130) all withdrawn. As with previous 36, early morning and mid/late evening journeys M-S, plus the last Sunday journey from SWF, do not serve Broughton Road in SWF.					
Frequency change	Reduced from every 30 minutes to hourly (with peak extras)					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly plus peak extras	M-S evenings:	Hourly (fewer on Sat)	Suns:	2-hourly

351	Chelmsford - Warley Eagle Way					
via	Margaretting, Ingatestone, Mountnessing, Brentwood town centre and station. No service Brentwood station to Warley on Sundays					
Replaces:	No change					
Changes:	No change					
Frequency change	Unchanged					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly	M-S evenings:	Hourly	Suns:	2-hourly

370, 371 - see 70, 71 respectively

Airport services



X10	Basildon Bus Station - Stansted Airport					
via	Wickford, Chelmsford, Broomfield Hospital, Great Waltham, Barnston Night journeys omit Broomfield Hospital and Great Waltham					
Changes:	Section Basildon to Chelmsford restored, diverted to also serve Wickford station					
Frequency change	Restored to pre-pandemic timetable (it had only operated Chelmsford to Stansted since <corrected> November 2021) but with one less trip each way.					
Standard headway	Daily	Hourly daytimes & evenings, limited services overnight				

X30	Southend Travel Centre - Stansted Airport					
via	Southend Airport (Eastwoodbury Crescent), Kent Elms Corner, Eastwood, Rayleigh, Chelmsford, Broomfield Hospital, Barnston, Great Dunmow Night journeys omit Great Dunmow and Southend Airport; selected journeys omit Broomfield Hospital					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Frequency change	Unchanged					
Standard headway	Daily	Hourly daytimes & evenings, limited services overnight				

Supported services, school routes and contracts

Editorial team

Where routes are supported by Essex County Council and are continuing unchanged, only brief details are given here. We have also included school services and known (registered) contracts.:

1A	Colchester Greenstead Elm Crescent – Colchester Ambrose Avenue					
via	Harwich Rd, Goring Rd, Ipswich Rd, Osborne St, Maldon Rd, Boadicea Way North, Walnut Tree Way, Shrub End, Straight Road, Ambrose Avenue, returning via Prettygate and King Harold Road.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	60/65 mins

2A	Colchester Highwoods Tesco – Great Horkesley Malvern Way					
via	St Johns Estate, Ipswich Rd, Osborne St, Colchester Rail Station, Mile End Rd, Nayland Rd.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	hourly	Suns:	65/75 mins

10	Basildon Hospital – Shotgate Hodgson Way					
via	Basildon, Noak Bridge, Crays Hill, Ramsden Bellhouse, Ramsden Heath, Runwell, Wickford,					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	4 journeys plus 2 short workings	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

13/A/14	Chelmsford Bus Station – Wickford The Wick					
via	13: Galleywood, West Hanningfield, Rettendon, South Hanningfield, Brock Hill, Wickford; 14: Galleywood, Stock, Downham, Brock Hill, Wickford. Service 13A serves all points (except Stock), runs at peak times only.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Approx hourly 13/14 combined, plus Wickford shorts	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

16	Wickford Rail Station – Runwell St Lukes, Bruton Link					
via	Wickford Broadway, Runwell Church					
Status:	ECC contract, minor timetable change plus new bus stops in Runwell					
Standard headway	M-S day:	30 mins	M-S evenings:	30 mins	Suns:	30 mins until 1900

17	West Bergholt - Stanway School					
via	Chapel Rd, Colchester Rd, Braiswick, Bergholt Rd, Colchester Rail Stn, Colne Bank Ave, Cymbeline Way, London Rd					
Changes:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 2 trips each way (running together)					

32	Chelmsford Trent Road - Ongar Two Brewers					
via	Writtle, Highwood, Blackmore, High Ongar					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	2-hourly	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

42A, 42B - see Interurban section above

46	Chelmsford Bus Station - Ongar Two Brewers					
via	Writtle, Roxwell, Willingale, Fyfield					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	c. 2-hourly	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

47	Chelmsford Old Moulsham - Broomfield Hospital					
via	Bus Station, Sandford Road, Chelmer Village, North Springfield					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Hourly	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service
68	Colchester Highwoods Tesco – West Mersea High Street					
via	Mill Rd, Colchester General Hospital, Turner Rd, Colchester Rail Station, High Street, Mersea Rd, Monkwick, Blackheath, Abberton, Peldon.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	hourly	Suns:	No service
73/A	Chelmsford Bus Station - Maldon Cherry Gardens					
via	Springfield Road, Hatfield Peverel, Heybridge Schooldays one trip each way to/from Plume School, not Cherry Gardens in Maldon 73A via Chelmer Village, Sandford Rd, Victoria Rd and continues to Moulsham - 1 trip M-S, towards Chelmsford only					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	c. 2 hourly	M-S evenings:	None	Suns:	None
74B	Colchester Stanwell Street – Clacton Jackson Road					
via	East Hill, Greenstead Road, University of Essex, Wivenhoe, Alresford, Thorrington, St Osyth, Clacton Coopers Lane.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	2-hourly	Suns:	No service
76	Colchester Stanwell Street – Clacton Jackson Road					
via	East Hill, Greenstead Road, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Elmstead Market, Frating, Weeley, Little Clacton, Great Clacton.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	2-hourly
80A/C	Brentwood Rail Station - Hutton Wash Road Circular					
via	Brentwood Town Centre, Shenfield Rail Station, 80A anti-clockwise, 80C clockwise					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	None	M-S evenings:	None	Suns:	Each 2-hourly
94/A/B	Basildon Bus Station – South Woodham Ferrers Asda					
via	94: Pipp's Hill, Paycocke Road, Salcott Crescent, Wickford town centre, Runwell, Rettendon Turnpike, South Woodham Station, Inchbonnie Rd (south section), Asda, Ferrers Rd, Hamberts Rd, King Edwards Rd, Station, Clements Green Lane, Inchbonnie Rd (north section), back to Asda; 94A as 94 but additionally via Collingwood Road in South Woodham; 94B as 94 from Basildon but after Wickford town centre double runs to Brock Hill (Linden Rd), Runwell Church End, Southend Rd Wickford, Beauchamps School. Morning journey continues to S. Woodham via Carpenters Arms, A1245					
Status:	ECC contract. Now runs both directions around Cranfield Park Rd & Salcott Crescent replacing the previous one-way loop. On Sundays, continues to be just a local South Woodham town service but revised and no longer serves Inchbonnie Road (south section) or Marsh Farm and runs as 94, replacing numbers 94C/94D.					
Standard headway	M-S day:	60 mins M-F, 120 mins Sat	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	2-hourly South Woodham Circular only
174/5	Colchester Stanwell Street – Fringinghoe Frere Way					
via	174: Old Heath, Blackheath, Langenhoe 175: Old Heath, Rowhedge.					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Irregular 7 journeys each way	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

251	Wickford Broadway The Swans – Warley Eagle Way					
via	Great Burstead, Billericay, Hutton, Shenfield, Brentwood					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	No service	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	2-hourly

525	Chelmsford, Wood St roundabout - Colchester, Norman Way schools (afternoon starts at Lexden Road, Essex County Hospital site)					
via	Chelmsford rail station, Springfield, Witham, Kelvedon, Feering, A12, Cymbeline Way, Lexden Rd					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way					

561	Basildon bus station - Chelmsford, St John Payne school					
via	Laindon station, Great Burstead, Billericay, Stock, Galleywood, Wood St, Broomfield Rd					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 2 trips each way (running together)					

565	Brentwood Rail Station – Bulphan Church					
via	Herongate, West Horndon					
Status:	ECC contract, no change to previous route or timetable					
Standard headway	M-S day:	Herongate approx every 60 mins Bulphan approx every 120 mins	M-S evenings:	No service	Suns:	No service

570	Great Dunmow, High Street - Colchester, Norman Way schools (afternoon starts at Lexden Road, Essex County Hospital site)					
via	Little Dunmow, Felsted, A120, Great Notley (double run), Braintree town centre, Coggeshall, A12, Cymbeline Way, Lexden Rd					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way					

620	Abridge, Roding Hall - Ingatestone, Market Place (for Anglo European School)					
via	Theydon Bois, Epping (incl. double run to station), North Weald, Ongar, Wyatts Green, Mountnessing					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way					

625	Chelmsford bus station - Southend, Prittlewell Chase (Southend High School for Boys)					
via	New London Rd, Wood St, Galleywood, Stock, Billericay, Great Burstead, Crays Hill, Wickford, Shotgate, A1245, A127, The Fairway, Kenilworth Gardens (Westcliff High Schools)					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way					

725	Basildon bus station - Southend, Prittlewell Chase (Southend High School for Boys)					
via	Noak Bridge, Crays Hill, Ramsden Bellhouse, Ramsden Heath, Brock Hill, Wickford by pass, Shotgate, Little Wheatleys, Rayleigh town centre, Eastwood Rd, Kent Elms Cnr, Treecot Dr, Kenilworth Gdns (Westcliff High Schools)					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way					

For **825**, refer to 25 (under Southend notes). Service 825 is open to the public, not restricted to school children.

S33	Ongar, Four Wantz - Debden Park High School					
via	Passingford Bridge, Abridge, Grange Hill station, Chigwell station, Debden station					
Changes:	Unchanged					
Journeys:	Schooldays only, 1 trip each way Restricted to school children, we think					

Z2	Canning Town - Tilbury, Amazon warehouse	
via	Barking, Chequers Lane, Rainham then direct to Tilbury	
Changes:	New, previously Ensign Bus. Now registered to First Essex Buses but currently still operated by Ensign . It is expected that First will assume direct operation later in 2022.	
Frequency	Irregular timetable, around shift changes. One night journey to Tilbury, 6 journeys in morning peak and 5 in the afternoon. Return 3 trips in both morning and evening peaks. Certain journeys towards Amazon start at Barking, not Canning Town.	Expected to be restricted to Amazon staff only

Z3	Southend, Southchurch Boulevard, Arlington Road - Tilbury, Amazon warehouse	
via	A13 (Westcliff, Leigh, Hadleigh, Benfleet Tarpots) then direct to Tilbury	
Changes:	New. Previously operated by SBC Leisure (unregistered contract)	
Frequency	Daily, 4 journeys each way at shift change times.	Understood to be restricted to Amazon staff only

Z4	Pitsea Broadway - Tilbury, Amazon warehouse	
via	Basildon bus station, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Chadwell St Mary	
Changes:	New. Previously operated by Ensign	
Frequency	Daily, 4 journeys each way at shift change times.	Understood to be restricted to Amazon staff only

Routes withdrawn or renumbered

Richard Delahoy

Here is a listing of all previous services that have been withdrawn. In most cases new services or alterations to existing routes cover them at least in part.

5, 5A, 5B, 5X, 8, 8A, 21B, 26, 27X, 36A, 36B, 36X, 40, 42, 45, 45A, 45C, 51, 54, 54A, 54B, 56, 56A, 57, 57A, 57B, 57C, 61, 62B, 64, 64A, 65, 66, 67B, 67C, 70A, 71A, 71B, 71C, 75A, 94C, 94D, 822.

In some cases, the variations from a main route that previously carried a suffix letter listed above still continue to deviate from the main route but without that being denoted in the service number, as explained on page 3 and elsewhere.

The following were renumbered:

31X to 331, 31B, 31C, 31D to 332, 36 to 336, 62 to 87, 67 to 86, 70 (through journeys) to 370, 70A to 70, 71 to 371, 71A to 71/371, 71X to X71, 100 (Chelmsford to Basildon section) to 300.



71X was used for fast journeys on the Chelmsford - Witham - Colchester corridor and these are now numbered X71 as First abolishes the use of most suffix letters (except where specified by Essex CC). Essentially X71 is positioning journeys early or late M-F/Su, although 33249 seen here in High Street, Colchester on 26 April was on the 1440 ex Chelmsford, which then works the 1600 370 back to Chelmsford via Braintree. The bus was a recent transfer from BN to CF. A Volvo B7TL/ALX400, now in its 20th year in service, it began life as a dual door bus in London with Centrewest as VFL1249. It has since been withdrawn. The bunting is out already for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Robert Appleton

Service frequencies have generally been reduced outside peak hours, but the peak period requirement has meant that there has been minimal change to the overall PVR, we think. We don't have access to official company data, but looking at BusTimes at the peak morning time, around 0800, suggests that the pvr is now about 252 vehicles, possibly slightly higher (by depot: BN 66, CF 82, CR 54, HH 50). That will increase by 6 when First take on operation of Amazon route Z2.

There have been few allocation changes between depots directly as a result of the service revisions and, at the time of writing, few withdrawals. The main change is four Enviro 200 MMCs transferring from Chelmsford to Basildon along with route X10 which has had its Basildon to Chelmsford section reinstated. However, the situation may change in the coming months as buses are repainted into red and green and there are further acquisitions. TVS, Laindon are now being used to repaint vehicles as well as Mardens, Benfleet, so the speed of repaints should increase. But so far no vehicles have appeared in red shuttle livery, which is expected to be slightly different to the City Red livery on the four StreetLites that came from Southampton.

Looking at each depot in turn:

Basildon

Prior to the service revisions, double-deckers were used on local routes 5 & 8 group, plus 5A/B/X extension to Grays, 9 to Brentwood, 25 to Southend, school routes and rare appearances on Wickford route 16. Also, in recent months, there had been more double-deckers on the Basildon to Lakeside section of 100, including the ex-First West of England Enviro 400s that are now in Essex Bus green, some with branding for 100. The main change is the conversion of the town network to hybrid operation, to address local air quality issues, using some of the 19 Volvo 7900s previously used primarily on the 100. Route 100 (now just Basildon to Lakeside) has predominantly been converted to double-deck operation, with the northern section (now route 300) operated by a mixture of single-deckers - Volvo hybrids still appear, usually at least three a day, often more; Enviro 350 hybrids are also often on the 300. The balance of the Volvos appear elsewhere, including X10 and 25.

There have been few other changes since the revisions. Mini Enviro 200s remain on the 10, 16 and 94/A but all other single-deckers can basically be used on any route. With the reduction of the daytime 9 service to hourly, most workings are now double deck and 25 remains predominantly double decked, as do the school routes. Double-deckers on town routes are now very rare, and have only been noted on B1. A notice in the bus station suggested that some of the E200MMCs previously used on the Chelmsford Park & Ride are to be used on X10; 2 have been transferred from Chelmsford (along with the two still in blue **airlink** livery) but they remain in black for now.

Chelmsford

Prior to the service revisions, double-deckers operated on X30 (Scania), 70 and 72 (Volvos) and school routes, all other routes were restricted to single-deckers by the low railway bridge in Duke Street. Single-deckers could basically be used on any routes, but Darts and Enviro 200s were in the main used on more local routes plus Brentwood services and Volvo B7RLEs tended to be used on out-of-town routes plus the 42. There have been few vehicle changes since the service revisions, the principal one being that the 71 to Colchester via Witham and Kelvedon is now partly double-deck operated as the 371 (and re-routed out of the bus station via Coval Lane and Parkway, then up Victoria Road South to Duke Street to avoid the railway bridge). All Darts in service before the revisions remain in use, although some Volvo B7RLEs are now surplus.

Colchester

Prior to the service changes, most vehicles could work on any route. Out of town routes were mainly operated by double-deckers, although less so on the Harwich routes and not on the 71 (now 371) to Chelmsford. Little has so far changed since the revisions, although once vehicles are repainted into red (shuttles) and green (out of town routes), vehicles will in theory become more restricted to the routes that they are liveried for. Both double-deckers and single-deckers operate the S routes; the former are often on the Highwoods routes, S1 and S2. Double-deckers continue to work on the 370 (ex 70), but none have been reported on Colchester operated journeys on the 371.

Hadleigh

Like Colchester, vehicle allocation to routes remains fluid, although the interworked 22 & 28 continue to be restricted to single-deckers due to a low bridge at Pitsea. On all days, some 22/28 now also interwork with 27 at Canvey and some 20s in Southend, restricting those diagrams to single deckers as well. Most crew changes on 20 are now at Rayleigh or Hullbridge, using a driver transfer vehicle. Deckers can be used on the diagrams where 27 only interworks with 20, and on the 21. Due to their length, the 12m Volvo B7RLE/Wrights work almost exclusively on the 22 & 28 and not on 20/27. Two Enviro 400s have been acquired from First West of England to help cover for the new Amazon contract routes Z3 and Z4; these routes are worked by a mixture of single and double-deckers. As Hadleigh does not operate any shuttle routes, it will become an all green depot (apart from heritage liveries) and StreetLite 63161 has recently become the first vehicle at this depot to receive the new Essex Bus livery.

Interworking of Shuttle routes

With the town/city networks, there is a degree of interworking between routes, sometimes only at certain times of day, in Chelmsford at the Rail Station/Bus Station and in Colchester at the High St/Osborne St and at Highwoods. This is particularly prevalent on Sundays in Chelmsford. Weekday examples include C4/C5, C3/C11/C12, S6/S7/S8 and B4/B5 (at Basildon bus station).

On Sundays, we have for example observed a diagram in Chelmsford running successively as C10, C2, C5, C4, C7, C2, C8, C3, C11, C2, C4, C5 over the course of the day, the bus changing routes each time it passed through the city centre. Presumably that is a common feature of the Sunday operations there.

However, this linking of routes is not advertised other than on some destination blind displays and it is not clear if passengers can remain on the bus and pay a single fare for a cross-city trip - presumably not, at least so far as the fare is concerned.

Have we been here before?

Richard Delahoy

Whilst these changes are the single greatest upheaval in the history of Eastern National and First Essex, there have been various other major mass changes at specific dates over the years. We don't have room to list all those "watershed" events here, and a definition of what constitutes a significant network change is very subjective, but here are some that come to mind, offering a historical context.

In the early 1950s, EN undertook a comprehensive renumbering exercise, following on from the allocation of numbers to the former City Coach and Hicks Bros routes, to eliminate duplicate route numbers, integrate the Westcliff Motor Services numbers into the EN series as part of the merger of WMS into EN and to deal with the Co-Ordination Agreement with Southend Corporation. In simple terms, the Southend area numbers were unchanged, most Chelmsford and Maldon area ones had 30 added (eg 1 became 31), many Colchester routes had 70 added and some anomalies were resolved. In all, around seventy services had new numbers, but without any significant changes to routes or timetables.

Fast forward a decade, and the growth of Basildon New Town led to a wholesale reorganisation of routes in April 1964, affecting not just Basildon but reaching to many parts of the company's area. At the time it was regarded as the most extensive set of revisions ever undertaken on one day. The euphoria of those positive changes was lost the following year when there were yet more extensive revisions in April 1965, mostly reductions, albeit balanced by some new facilities including linking the 51, 70 & 310 to become a through service from Harwich to Bishop's Stortford, 70. Places such as Wiston (look it up on a map, I'd never heard of it either!) found themselves no longer served by EN. Those changes were so extensive that we needed a supplement to our news-sheet, which increased from two sides of foolscap to four for one issue!

In 1980 Eastern National undertook a detailed analysis of the whole route network using the principles established by the National Bus Company as their "Market Analysis Project", although EN called their scheme the "Traffic Action Plan", which resulted in many route changes and again added two pages to our news-sheet. Those changes took effect in September 1980 and were publicised by no fewer than twelve free local area timetable books.

Another watershed moment came with deregulation in 1986, when EN, as with all operators, had to identify and register its viable commercial network, representing about 80% of its previous mileage. That inevitably led to a number of established routes being withdrawn and evening/Sunday operations curtailed, although some work was won back on Essex CC tenders.

The concept of revitalising a town network with distinctive route numbers is not new either, since that's exactly what EN did in Basildon back in 1978, with routes numbered in a new 5xx series. Then at the end of the 1980s/start of the 1990s, EN/Thamesway converted most town networks to minibus operation with higher frequencies and often new route numbers and service patterns. Then from 2002/3, First then tried similar ideas with their Overground and Metro brands for established routes in key towns. Now we have Shuttles. More recently we have seen a progressive retrenchment by First, quitting Braintree in 2015 and Clacton in 2018, but those changes aside, the route network had remained reasonably stable - until now that is.



About Essex Bus Magazine and the EBEG

For Omnibus Society members and anyone else reading this who is not already a member of the Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group (EBEG), *Essex Bus Magazine* is published monthly and sent to all members. Running to 36 pages (including covers), each EBM presents a mix of current news of the major operators across the county - services, vehicles and operations - together with historical articles and features. The magazine showcases excellent photos, both topical and historical, and is in full colour throughout, except where archive pictures are only available in black & white. In addition, in 2022 we started to publish two "Extras" a year to give greater coverage for historical features. Publication of these Extras has been sponsored by individual members with no increase in subscriptions. Extra #1 told the story of "The Stag" bus service in Bishop's Stortford, memories of Southend Corporation in 1958/9, how the level crossing at Manningtree influenced local bus services, a look at two destination blinds of the City Coach Company, some archive colour photos, a never-before published internal Eastern National memo about route renumbering in the early 1950s (showing what *didn't* happen! - using material from The Bus Archive), and finally a more modern article looking at recent transfers of buses between First Essex and First's Scottish fleets.

Membership costs £25 a year and is only available for paper copies, we do not yet offer electronic subscriptions. Back numbers are also available at a discounted price. For more details visit www.essexbus.org.uk or e-mail/write to Richard Delahoy, address below. And follow us on Facebook, [essexbus](https://www.facebook.com/essexbus) - fb.me/essexbus.

Rear Cover:

The new image for First Essex features three distinct brands - the red Shuttles, green EssexBus and blue *airlink* - although the majority of the fleet continues to be in various iterations of First's corporate colours. There are no buses yet in the new Shuttle livery (the current four red buses are in the scheme as received from Southampton seen on pages 11 & 20 and the shuttle version will differ in detail from them) and we've illustrated the green livery on page 9. There are also seven buses in various heritage liveries (including one Midland Red example, transferred from Worcester but currently off the road) and two in special schemes. One special livery is on 33425 as seen here in Braintree's new bus interchange on 5 January, with work still under way to complete the bus stands which had opened a couple of days earlier, replacing the old Bus Park. It is working route 70 - the destination display *was* working but as is often the case with electronic displays, a fast camera shutter speed failed to capture it. The bus is an ADL E400 - originally an ADL demonstrator, it ran with various operators, was latterly in Ensign's operational fleet and passed to First Essex in 2013.

Below is the very attractive *airlink* blue livery as modelled by 36837 passing Rayleigh station on 21 July last year and thankfully with no advertising disfiguring the clean lines of the livery on this occasion. This batch (36837-43) features ADL E400 bodies on Scania N250UD chassis and have coach seats, tables and luggage racking. All seven Scania's are in this attractive livery, along with E200s, 67161/3.

Both **Richard Delahoy**.

The Editorial team gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ian Barlex, Peter Clark, Nicolas Collins, David Edwards, William Morrison, Derek Stebbing and information gleaned from BusTimes.org and essexbus.info (Essex County Council).

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This supplement has been compiled in good faith based on publicly available data and attempting to make sense of conflicting sources, using the information published at the time of writing. Some on-line timetables have been updated and keeping track of the versions is difficult! Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but neither Group can accept responsibility for any errors published.

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We **have** been here before! Basildon's town services were comprehensively revised and renumbered in 1978 as 500 to 505. These two shots both show the short section of bus only road in Long Riding, just east of the town centre - there's a similar one in the Laindon Link to the west - designed to prevent general traffic rat-running through the estates. On the first day of the new services back in 1978, 21 May, Leyland National 1847 heads towards Pitsea. The Leyland National was the state-of-the-art bus model at the time, contrast with 69914 at the same spot on the new B4 on the third day of the latest incarnation of the Basildon town services, 19 April. It is a 2013-built Volvo 7900 hybrid, still in the livery/branding used on route 100. Some will presumably be repainted red in due course.

Both **Richard Delahoy**





697 for EBM 697

Last month we featured Eastern National 1128 (B696 WAR), a Leyland Tiger TRC/TL11/3RH with Plaxton Paramount 3500 (high floor) C51F body, new in January 1985. It was one of a pair delivered at the same time, and right is its sister 1129 (B697 WAR), this time on bus work on route 32 from Chelmsford to Ongar, at the lorry park, Ongar on 17 March 1997. The lorry park (now just a car park) was directly behind the Two Brewers bus stop, which at the time was used by several routes and, unlike now, the 32 had quite a bit of a layover time, and rather than blocking the Brewers stop drivers often used to park in the lorry park (other routes used to as well) and nip to the cafe for a cup of tea or coffee. The driver, who Robert used to work with, was ex Brentwood depot and got fed with driving 'bread vans' so he transferred to Chelmsford (although they too had their fair share of minibuses at the time) and he let Robert reposition the coach slightly for a better pic. **Robert Downton**
A correction to last month, 1128 (and also 1129) were delivered in National Holidays livery. The version of Highwayman livery that they later received had not yet been devised in 1985.



Below: Eastern Counties LH697 (VAH 697H) at Rigby Avenue, Mistley, in May 1977, after arrival on service 221 from Ipswich. A Bristol LH6P with ECW B45F body new in September 1969. The tall flat windscreen had been introduced on sister LH692 (RAH 692F), new in July 1968. This design change by ECW replaced the original shallow windscreen that caused sighting problems for tall drivers.

Robert Appleton





Above: First Essex Transbus Trident / President 33098 climbing Belton Way East with the scenic Thames Estuary backdrop behind it, on route 26 on 5 April 2022. The route was withdrawn twelve days later, this part of it is now covered daily by the revised routing on service 21. **John G Lidstone**

Front Cover: Recently acquired First Essex Enviro 400 MMC 33989 on school route 561 at the Broomfield Road / Parkway junction, Chelmsford on 19 April 2022. **Richard Delahoy**. More details of the livery on page 12.

Rear Cover: During the enforced closure during the pandemic, work has continued to remodel part of the interior of the Canvey Island Transport Museum, to provide improved facilities and better access for visitors. The remodelling affects the old shop, display area, toilets, café area and the model railway on the mezzanine floor. A low-key open day on Easter Sunday provided a first opportunity to see the work in progress. The top shot taken over the safety fence shows the extent of the work, with the model railway suspended in mid-air, waiting for the new lowered mezzanine floor to be installed, and work progressing on new toilets and a proper cafe. Further open days are planned for 15 May, 19 June, 17 July, 21 August and 18 September. It is no longer possible to hold the large open day / rally each October as access to the Labworth car park on the seafront is no longer available.

Right: The museum's open-top Bristol KSW / ECW 2380 (WNO 478) welcomes visitors.

All **Richard Delahoy**



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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.

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Sub-Editor drafts to Editor	3 June
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The last two dates are fixed, but late news can be sent up to 4th and will be included if possible, if not it will be held over to the next month.

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Group Notices

Membership News

Welcome to New Members

Rob Boyce, Ipswich - 1194

Flagfinders CTB Ltd, Braintree - 1195

Peter Bailey, Folkestone - 1196.

We are very sorry to report that news has just reached us of the death of member John Pollard (871) of Chelmsford, who passed away a few months ago. We offer our condolences to John's friends and family.

The Running Card by Owen Woodliffe

The following events have been advertised.

Saturday 14 May: Theydon Bois Transport Bazaar, 1100-1500, Village Hall, CM16 7IG.

Sunday 15 May: Fenland Bus Festival, Whittlesea. Regular free Heritage Services from Peterborough and Ramsay Fair & Car Show.

Sunday 15 May: Canvey Island Transport Museum open day. Further open days planned for open days are planned for 19 June, 17 July, 21 August and 18 September.

Sunday 22 May: Didcot Railway Centre Transport Rally & Vintage Road Run.

Sunday 29 May: 50 Years of East Anglian Transport Museum. Carlton Colville.

Saturday / Sunday 2/3 July: Vintage Transport Weekend, North Norfolk Railway, NR25 6AJ. Free heritage bus service Holt-Sheringham. bus@johnstewart.co.uk

Sunday 24 July: Steam Gala Day, Thursford, NR21 OAS. bus@johnstewart.co.uk

Sunday 7 August: Classic Vintage Bus Day. Mid Suffolk Light Railway, Brockford Station, Wetheringset. IP14 5PW.

Sunday 14 August: Big Bus Show. Stonham Barns Park, Stowmarket IP14 6AT.

Sunday 21 August: Lodge Coaches Bus & Show, High Easter, CM1 4QR.

Sunday 11 September: King's Lynn Heritage Open Day, PE30 1DS with free services around the Town. bus@johnstewart.co.uk.

Saturday / Sunday 18/19 September: '40's Weekend North Norfolk Railway. martin.westcliff@gmail.com

Events are published in good faith. However, the Group cannot be responsible for any changes due to future circumstances. Please check before travelling.

Omnibus Society Coach Tour

A reminder that an Omnibus Society tour celebrating 90 years of Eastern National, using former EN Bristol MW coach 7017 HK, will take place on Saturday 11 June. Bookings are still available. Pick-up times at Tilbury Ferry (0910), Grays Bus Station (0925), Laindon Railway Station (1015) and Chelmsford Railway Station (Victoria Road) (1055). The tour will recreate parts of the major cross-Essex routes 51/53 and 19/19A. Return via Southend (Travel Centre) at 1450 and Chelmsford at 1550. For further details and to book, please email Andrew Gipson at andrewgipson@btinternet.com.

Essex Bus Magazine Issue 697 Supplement

As reported under 'Service Revisions' last month, First Essex made very extensive service changes from 17 April, the largest single set of changes ever by First Essex and its predecessor Eastern National. These are related to the effects of the pandemic and the ending of Government Covid funding at the start of autumn 2022. To do justice to the changes - which are far too extensive and complicated to explain fully in our normal 36-page coverage - we are publishing a special supplement, edited by Richard Delahoy, as a joint venture with our friends in the Essex & Suffolk Branch of the Omnibus Society. This special EBM 697 supp. is being finalised as we go to press and we hope to send it to all members around two weeks after this issue of EBM appears. It's being provided to members free of charge, financed from our accumulated funds. We hope you will find it interesting and informative.

Essex Bus Magazine

Focus on First Essex's radical service changes

Issue 697 supp. May 2022



Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group

Omnibus Society

Eastern & Southern Branch

Letters

This month more feedback on EBM Extra 1 starting with David Grimmett from Somerset

In EBM Extra 1 my eye was caught by a sentence in **Richard Delahoy's** 'What's in a Number?' article - "with a PVR of around 25 buses, ignoring both duplicates and reliefs". The use of both terms implies a difference between duplicate and relief, but what was the difference? The use of these words has always intrigued me. Was it geographical, based on company usage, or were the terms just simply interchangeable? Back in the early 1970s, on the Essex Coast and East Anglian Expresses, a system was introduced whereby on busy days each coach would have affixed to the windscreen a label reading either 'Service Coach' or 'Relief Coach' (see right and next page). These were used by all the operating companies and helped inspectors etc., pick out quickly which were the service coaches i.e., the ones whose driver had responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of a particular service and whose task it was to call at all points and ensure they were clear of passengers. So if you wanted to get to your destination quickly, get on a relief but if you wanted to get your money's worth, take the service coach.



But gradually further study of these terms led me to the conclusion that generally a duplicate was a bus (or coach) that stayed with the service bus and acted as duplicate to it, maybe leapfrogging at stops but never losing touch with its guardian. Whereas a relief would have its own life. Using Essex Coast Express as an example, many reliefs would be full at Victoria so then it was hey ho, Clacton here we come, no calling into points like Stratford, Chelmsford and Colchester.

So that is my take on the use of relief and duplicate, what is Richard's?

Richard replies:

David raises an interesting question! In my experience, the terms 'relief' and 'duplicate' seem to have been used in different ways by different parts of the industry and usage may have changed / evolved over the years. In the route numbers article, I was using the term 'duplicate' to mean planned, scheduled extra trips, i.e., a regular part of the timetable, albeit not in the public version, and 'relief' to mean ad-hoc extras run at short notice to cope with exceptional loadings, e.g., getting people home from Southend on a summer's evening.

Referring to the 251 route, Southend to Wood Green, some years ago in an e-mail newsgroup, the late Alan Watkins, a long-standing enthusiast observer of the City Coach Company scene, offered these memories of how City used them: "Southend Relief, Southend Extra Relief and Southend Through Relief (ditto for Wood Green of course). The relief observed all stops along the journey if it had room or people wished to get off, the Extra Relief stopped / picked up only at major points such as Gants Hill, Romford, Brentwood etc. - a sort of 'limited stop' relief. The through relief did not stop anywhere - it was a full load with no intermediate stops to either Southend or Wood Green". Those were all for ad-hoc extras according to demand on the day and the Extra and Through reliefs would not follow the service route but run as directly as possible.

I referred to those distinctions in my article 'Moving The Crowds' in EBM 680 (December 2020). Brian Barrett then followed up in his memories of the 251 in the 1960s (EBM 682, February 2021), saying: "local traffic carried within the LT area was extensive enough to require mid-week duplication, particularly on Romford Market Day on a Wednesday". He's also given a further example, writing in an e-mail to me that "In 1966, there was still some Monday to Friday 251 duplication into Southend, an example being empty from Southend to Rawreth Carpenters Arms then 1015 to Southend Victoria Circus, then empty back to Rawreth and 1115 back to Southend. Both these journeys ran four minutes ahead of the service bus and with an arrival in Southend of 1046 after the first journey, it was often a bit tight to return for an on time departure at 1115". These are all examples of pre-planned duplicates rather than reliefs.

I'm not sure whether the key legislation governing bus operations, the 1930 Road Traffic Act - which introduced a nationwide system of service licensing - offered a definition of the two terms, but individual route licences would have specified the limits on duplication / vehicle allowance per departure. Much more recently, in the deregulated market, the procedures for eligibility for BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant, previously Fuel Duty Rebate) make a distinction between pre-planned, regular duplicates (on which BSOG must not be claimed, unless the journeys are shown separately in public timetables) and ad-hoc duplicates, which are eligible for BSOG. Similarly, the guidance issued by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner on local service operation refers to 'duplicate vehicles', which should only run in special circumstances - if there is a need for regular duplication, it should be timetabled.

So in conclusion, 'duplicate' and 'relief' are somewhat flexible terms and usage will have varied from operator to operator, but to me, the distinction is whether the extra bus is scheduled or ad-hoc.



Above: & close-up on previous page: Clacton based Bristol RELH / ECW 1602 (BNO 103B) in the coach park of The Duke of Wellington, Hatfield Peverel. Just below the ECX label and above the PAYE sign is a 'relief coach' sticker. **J Rowley © / Bus Archive**

David Tomlin from Wickford

I must say how impressed I was with the first issue of the Essex Bus Magazine Extra and it evoked such wonderful memories for me.

My Dad was a soldier and we came back to England from West Germany in 1954 and lived, for a very short time in Westcliff-On-Sea. I used to go to Hamlet Court Road Junior School, which meant I often stood on the corner of Hamlet Court Road and London Road just to watch these fantastic blue and cream buses share the road with green buses (I don't recall seeing any red ones - but memories blur and fade).

On Saturday mornings I used to catch either a 6 or 17 from the Holland Road stop to go to Saturday morning pictures at the Ritz.

Terry Challis from Blackpool

Thank you for the Essex Bus Magazine Extra. I lived in Hadleigh during my childhood and teenage years so my interest in buses, which I had since I was six, must have been similar to that of John Bath. Thank you to him for his interesting article about Southend Transport 1958/59.

Living at Hadleigh meant that my usual bus travel was on Westcliff, Eastern National or Benfleet and District. But things changed when I began my secondary education at Westcliff High School for Boys in 1951. Then I could travel on Southend Corporation trolleybuses, sometimes from the school up Nelson Road to Chalkwell Schools where I had a good selection of buses to Hadleigh. The most interesting were the 2Cs on their way to Shellhaven or Coryton to collect workers from the oil refineries. These were usually a motley collection of highbridge AECs or even Dennises, all of them had Gardner 5LW engines.

Another, more interesting route to school involved travelling on the 24 from Hadleigh to Leigh Station. There I could get the service 21 direct to Westcliff High School. This journey was duplicated to cater for the number pupils. The usual allocation was two Bristol G05Gs with post-war Beadle bodies. The highlight of this experience was the arrival of the Leyland PD2/20s in 1956 with Weymann bodies. As John mentions, they looked very modern with their 'tin fronts'. However we must remember that at around the same time Westcliff / Eastern National had introduced Lodekkas with 'tin-fronts'!

In 1956 I left school and went to work in the schedules department at Eastern National in Chelmsford. My journey to work involved travelling from Hadleigh to Rayleigh on service 1 and then on an 11 or 11A to Chelmsford. By this time the Southend Co-ordination agreement was in operation and the service 1 was operated by Southend Corporation Transport. The vehicles used were AEC Regent II or Regent IIIs or Daimler CVD6s or CVA6s, all with Massey lowbridge bodies. Apparently the new Leylands were too high to go under Hockley Railway bridge which was on the service 7 that the number 1s worked in order to get back to Southend. The first Leylands able to do so were the LHJ batch of PD2/12s. I hope that these comments may be of interest to some of our members.

Robert Downton from Ongar

I found the first EBM Extra interesting, must have taken a while to put together, but it was a job well done. It also solved a mystery for me. I photographed Halls Coaches DAF SB230 / Irizar B920 CSU (new to Mayo, Caterham) (right) at Southend on 9 October 1994, but could never find out exactly where they were based; as it said in the article, info was a bit scarce.



We also heard from Peter Carr from Sawbridgeworth. His letter includes some interesting illustrations which we don't have the space to do justice to this month, so it is held over to EBM 698.



by Chris Stewart

New Vehicles

YX22 OGS/T/U/V Enviro 200 MMCs. Delivered 5 May 2022. In black livery for Chelmsford Park & Ride services. First two are numbered 307/8 and were in service on Saturday 7th, with Vectare fleet names and numbers but no other decals. More details next month.

Acquired Vehicle

Optare Solo M920 YN04 LWK, B33F, new to Ipswich Buses as 241 in May 2004. It is numbered 297. It was first seen on route 61 on 3 May and is seen below in Brentwood High Street on 6th. **Chris Stewart**



Service Revisions

by Ian Ransom

12 March 2022

549 South Woodford Station - Loughton Station (M-S) **Stagecoach London** TfL contract passed to **Sullivan Buses**, their first regular service in Essex, although they have provided rail replacement services, mainly for TfL Rail (see EBM 696, page 11).

28 March

88 Colchester - Great Yeldham (M-F) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. 1008 from Halstead Conies Road extended to Colchester. 1104 journey from Colchester to Halstead Conies Road reinstated, these had both previously been withdrawn due to a shortage of drivers.

89 Braintree - Great Yeldham (M-S) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. Minor timetable changes (M-F), additional morning journeys on Saturday, which had previously been withdrawn due to a shortage of drivers.

11 April

D4 Burnham on Crouch - Bradwell Waterside (M-S) **Essex & Suffolk DaRT**. Revised route and timetable introduced.

17 April

Major changes to **First Essex** routes, too many to list here, so these will be included in an Essex Bus Magazine 697 supplement, as detailed on page 3.

Further to EBM 694 & 695, **First Essex** took over operation of Amazon routes Z3 (from **SBC Leisure**) and Z4 (from **Ensignbus**) from 17 April with Z2 (from **Ensignbus**) due to follow at a later date.

19 April

24 Southend - Southchurch (M-S) **Stephensons**. Revised timetable and linked to 24A at Whittingham Avenue.

24A Southend - Southchurch (M-S) **Stephensons**. NEW SERVICE replaces First Essex 26 between these points, operating every 30 minutes.

702 Chelmer Valley P&R (M-S) **Vectare**. Revised evening timetable introduced.

25 April

288 Maldon Town Service (M-S) **Stephensons**. Revised route and timetable, no longer serves Heybridge, following removal of funding from Heybridge Parish Council.

D1 Bradwell East End - Maldon (M-F) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. The 0724 ex St Lawrence now starts from Bradwell at 0713 (it had only been available to school children between these points).

4 May

Unnumbered (W only) NEW SERVICE Polly's Field, Church Lane, Bocking to Braintree Town Hall. **Braintree Community Transport** Community Bus Flexible Route.

28 May

7 Clacton - St Osyth Beach (D) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. Introduction of summer 2022 service.

134 Clacton - Holland-on-Sea Circular (D) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. Introduction of summer 2022 service, open-top operated, weather permitting.

135 Clacton - Great Clacton (M-S) **Go Ahead Hedingham**. Revised route, to travel clockwise around Hempstead Avenue and Peter Bruff Avenue.

With thanks to Paul Harvey.

Lodge Coaches, High Easter

by Ian Ransom

Acquired Vehicles

From Blackpool Transport are Transbus Trident / East Lancs PJ03 TFX/TFX. TFX was illustrated in EBM 695.

From Ipswich Buses Optare Solo YJ05 XNY. This bus is normally used on a Forest Hall school contract. Note, the other ex-Ipswich Buses Solo has also turned up in Essex, with Vectare, as reported on the previous page.

From Tyrers, Farnworth are VDL DB250 / East Lancs RX06 WRU and YJ56 KCK.

Sold Vehicles

Dennis Trident / East Lancs E14/15 BTS (ex-EMN 52/49Y) to Linburg, Sheffield.

Colchester

4468 (MX61 AXJ) VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 was transferred from Southend on 14 April. More details about this vehicle were in EBM 692. Photo on opposite page.

News of the former Park & Ride fleet is that 4072 was in service at Maidstone (now in the new livery) by 15 April, 4073/4 are now at Gillingham awaiting repaint and local use, 4075 also now reported to be at Gillingham. The StreetLites transferred away are now at Maidstone (4224) and Gillingham (4261).

The Colchester fleet currently comprises 30 buses:

ADL Enviro 200 x 21: 3986/90-3, 4011/2/5-22/38/9/44/7/52/3

ADL Enviro 200 MMC x 4: 4122-5

Wrightbus StreetLite x 3: 4262, 4323/4

VDL DB300 / Wrightbus DB300 x 2: 4459/68.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 1009 is also here, for crew shuttles.

Southend

As noted above, VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 4468 (MX61 AXJ) was transferred to Colchester on 14 April.

Ex Guildford Versa 4212 (YJ61 CIZ) finally entered service on 29 April, just over four months since it was transferred here, and has replaced VDL SB200 / Wrightbus 3760 (YJ08 DZL) which is now withdrawn.

The Southend fleet currently comprises 58 buses:

Optare Versa x 34: 4182/6, 4201-12, 4225/6/35/40, 4245-60

Volvo B7RLE x 1: 3816

VDL SB 200 x 5: 3756/9/61/77/9

ADL Trident / Enviro 400 x 18: 6458, 6499-6515.

Mercedes-Benz Sprinters 1014/9 are also here, for crew shuttles.

Harlow

A note has appeared in the bus station (and on some Solos) indicating that from 28 March buses on route 8 would be using Howard Way instead of Minchin Road due to the inaccessibility of the latter until a solution was found to the problem (thought to be due to parked cars).

Versa 4181 appears to have transferred to Ware (last sighted in Harlow 25 March, Bustimes has it working there up to 29th, then at Ware from 4 April).

Solo 2484 (YK07 BE0) was in use on route 2 on 22 April, on loan from Ware just for that day.

On 7 April Solo 2482 did a round trip to Stansted (0738 508 ex Harlow / 0852 510 ex Stansted) before being replaced by short Enviro 200 4008 (the usual 311 bus) for the rest of the day.

The Harlow fleet currently comprises 44 buses (excluding 4181):

Optare Solo x 8: 1454/7-9/66-7, 1517, 2482

Volvo B7RLE x 6: 3820/73/81-3/9

ADL Enviro 200 x1: 4008

ADL Enviro 200 MMC x 20: 4076-87/93/5-9, 4101/13

Optare Versa x 9: 4180/3-4, 4230-2/7-9

Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 1012 is also here, for crew shuttles.

Late news is that in early May, 4086 went to Derby and in exchange Scania N230UB OmniCity 3556 (YR58 SRY) arrived at Harlow. Despite its age 3556 is Euro VI standard and can be used on route 724 to Heathrow. More details next month.

With thanks to John Card, Steve Carr, Jeff Clayton, Chris Duncombe, Matthew Evans, Adam Kelleher, Keith Sadler, and the M&D & East Kent Bus Club.



Above right: Arriva Southend now has 34 Versas with the entry into service of 4212, seen here at Shoebury Renown on 3 May, also showing the slightly revised destination displays recently introduced (note 'Southend City' as a via). **Richard Delahoy**

Colchester Park & Ride Before & After

Partly de-branded Enviro 200 4073 (SK15 GXT) at Braintree on 4 April 2022, shortly before it transferred to Gillingham (see above). It was about to start a duty on route 133 to Stansted Airport.

John Podgorski



For contract renewal, four Enviro 200 MMCs, 4122-5, have been transferred to Colchester, fitted with air-conditioning and repainted into the Essex CC black P&R livery. 4123 (SN67 WUM) was photographed in the High Street on 30 April.

Nathaniel Mills



Transfer from Southend to Colchester

A photo of VDL DB300 / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 2 4468 (MX61 AXJ) appeared in EBM 692 operating on route 1. Here it is on route 2. However, the former was in Southend, but this bus, as reported above, has now transferred to Colchester. It is seen climbing North Hill on 26 April. Although in new livery, it still hasn't received white and blue relief or fleet names.

Robert Appleton



Not previously reported, Enviro 200 445 (YX10 FFA) was repainted from Stephenson's to NIBS livery last year, sometime between June and September.

Only two of the ex-New Horizon double-deckers are still in service, 709/10 (SFZ 818 [ex LF52 TJO], BX04 AZU). 709 is still in Seaford & District cream and two-tone green livery (but minus fleet names), 710 is in New Horizon mainly white livery.

Fords of Althorne Scania / Berkhof YN07 LKK was on loan from 22 April for a week whilst coach 200 (X400 MTT) was under repair.

Re the ex-London Scania OmniCities reported as acquired last month, none are yet in service or sold on. Correcting the list, YT09 ZCJ was fleet number SP59 (not SP60) and the registrations of some are actually YR59 FYO, FYP, FZA, FZG and YT59 PBF, PCF and not YT59 xxx as reported; the other registrations are correct.

With thanks to the companies, Adam Kelleher, Colin Sigston and Matt Crooke.

Recently acquired Scania
OmniCity YT59 DXZ at Braintree
depot on 26 April 2022.
John Podgorski



Enviro 200 441 (SN16 ORU) on
route 9 turning from Railway
Street into Manor Street,
Braintree, also on 26 April.
David Moth



Acquired Vehicles

44467	YX12 DHE	SFD7E1AR6CGY12827	B256/2	B39F	04/12	Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire
44469	YX12 GGO	SFD7E1AR6CGY33040	C216/1	B39F	08/12	Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire
44471	YX62 BNB	SFD7E1AR6CGY13080	C215/1	B39F	09/12	Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire
44473	YX62 BNU	SFD7E1AR6CGY13082	C215/3	B39F	09/12	Whitelaws, Stonehouse, Lanarkshire

Alexander Dennis E20D / Enviro 200s. Delivered to Westway, Chelmsford depot on 3 April 2022. 44467 is all white, the other three are all grey (presumably primer), high-backed e-leather seats, yellow stanchions. They moved to Halton Transport in 2016, but that company ceased trading in January 2020. It is assumed that they have been caught up in legalities since then, before being purchased by First Bus from an Oxfordshire vehicle dealer. But they were all removed from Westway on 6 April, reportedly returned to have faults rectified, before returning on 13th. 44471 (YX62 BNB) and 44469 (YX12 GGO) are seen below after initial arrival at Westway on 3 April.

Jack Benec


33685	SN12 AFU	SFD4DSBRFCGX36693	B450/30	H45/30F	06/12	First Games Transport
33750	SN12 AOK	SFD4DSBRFCGX36873	B452/35	H45/30F	06/12	First Games Transport

Alexander Dennis E40D / Enviro 400. From First West of England, Weston-Super-Mare. Exact date of acquisition not known but both were at Hadleigh by 11 April 2022. They both first appeared on Bustimes under First Essex on 1st, but that may have been prior to their actual arrival in Essex. There is a photo on Flickr of 33685 still at Weston on 25 March. These were part of the batch of 100 Enviro 400s purchased by First as shuttles for the 2012 Olympic Games. After the Games they moved to First Greater Manchester, before on to First West of England (33750 in summer 2016, 33685 not known, but assumed around the same time). 33685 is in Urban livery, 33750 is in the same First West of England orange 'Excel' livery that similar 33411-16/18-19 were acquired in. Like Hadleigh's Volvo B9TL / WrightBus Eclipse Gemini 2s 36216-20 (BJ12 VWY / VXA-D), which were also purchased for the 2012 Olympic Games (also as part of a batch of 100), these have additional tip-up seats at the front downstairs.



33685 entered service on routes 27 & 20 on 11 April. It is seen above on 11th on route 27 at Hadleigh, Victoria House Corner.

John G Lidstone. A photo of 33750 is on page 15. This entered service on the same routes on 21 April.

Further to EBM 696, Enviro 400 MMCs 33988 (in Urban 2 livery, as described last month) and 33989 entered service on school route 561 on 19 April. The latter has had its Urban livery with gold branding amended, it retains its areas of gold but the branding has been removed and its 'First Xpress' main fleet names have been altered to 'First Essex' (see front cover photo). 33984, in Urban 2 livery with gold relief, entered service the next day, seen on route 200. This has also had branding 'Xpress' removed but hadn't had an 'Essex' name added. These are the only three of the seven acquired that have so far entered service.

Allocation Changes

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

Period 1 2022/23 (26 March - 23 April)

32068 CR-CR (oos), 32249 BN-CF, 32539 CR-CR (oos), 32539 BN-CR, 32631 CF-CF (oos), 33086 BN (oos)-Disposal, 33413 BN (oos)-BN, 33418 BN (oos)-BN, 33553 BN (oos)-BN, 33685 FG-HH, 33750 FG-HH, 33984 oos-BN, 33988 oos-BN, 33989 oos-BN, 37133 CF (oos)-CR, 37136 CR (oos)-CR, 42923 CF-CF (oos), 42927 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42933 CF (oos)-Disposal, 42939 CF (oos)-Disposal, 44467 Acquired-CF (oos), 44469 Acquired-CF (oos), 44471 Acquired-CF (oos), 44473 Acquired-CF (oos), 63061 CR-HH, 63063 CR-HH, 63064 CR-HH, 63161 HH-HH (oos), 63328 HH-CR, 63329 HH-CR, 63331 HH-CR, 66795 CF-CF (oos), 66808 CF (oos)-Disposal, 66810 CR-CR (oos), 66815 CR-CF, 66819 BN (oos)-Disposal, 66830 CF-CR, 67161 CF-BN, 67163 CF-BN, 67190 CF-BN, 67191 CF-BN

Further to the photos and notes in EBM 696 about 32539 being the only Basildon Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini not to have transferred to Colchester, it was in service from CR the day after EBM 696 went to print! 32249 is to replace 32631 which has an axle issue. However, the former only lasted in service at CF for two days before developing problems of its own.

63065 (CR) and 63330 (HH) swapped depots later in April (so Period 2 transfers), so 63328-31 thus return to Colchester where they were new but left for Hadleigh in January 2020 (63328/9) and May 2021 (63330/1). The exchange of four of Colchester's StreetLites for four of Hadleigh's is to get all of the Daimler engined versions at one depot (Colchester) and for all SLs at HH to be Cummins engined. The section of route X10 from Basildon to Chelmsford was restored from 17 April and operation of the route returned to BN, hence the transfer back there of the two Essex Airlink liveried Enviro 200 MMCs, 67161 and 67163.

Disposals

33086, 42927, 42933, 42939, 66808, 66819 to Ensignbus April 2022 then all on to Shelton Motors for scrap the same month.

Tap & Cap

To clarify the reports in the last three EBM's, whilst child fares are still available within Tap & Cap areas, they cannot be paid for using Tap & Cap (obviously there is no way a Contactless Card could distinguish between an adult and a child).

Repaints

63161 seen on 11 April at Hadleigh in green Essex Bus livery, the first StreetLite to receive this livery (following accident repairs). 67166 at Basildon on 20 April also in green Essex Bus livery. Both had been in Urban livery, both repainted at TVS Laindon but just to the base colours, no yellow vinyls or fleet names applied. These were then added before the vehicles returned to service (63161 on 27 April and 67166 on 29th). Photos of 63161 are on pages 15 & 16. This is the third livery 67166 has had in five and a half years; it was new in November 2016 in X30 silver and green livery, then received Urban livery in July 2019. It is seen, right, on route X10 in Duke Street approaching Chelmsford Bus Station on 5 May **William Morrison**. Note, unlike other repaints, it has no wording on the cove panels, merely a Contactless symbol.

33414 repainted from First West of England orange 'Excel' livery to green Essex Bus livery at Mardens, returned to Basildon 21 April (with 33415 going the other way). Unlike 33416/8/9 reported last month, but like 33412/3, this does have branding for route 100 on the side advert panels.



Destination Blinds

These were changed for the 17 April 2022 service changes, details in 'Blind Spot' on pages 22-23.

Area News & Workings

Colchester

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CR except where stated. All dates April 2022 except where stated.)

Further to EBM 696, 66760 was again on loan from Chelmsford to Colchester, this time from 1-18 April.

Colchester depot is trialling running board numbers. These are white with four-digit black numbers. They are for the vehicle duty (not the driver's duty) and are to ensure that a driver takes over the correct bus at the bus station. See photo of 37139 on page 20.

News of the Harwich routes (5 April - 2 May 2022). During the Easter school holidays, an interchange between routes 104 and 174/175 took place on Mondays to Fridays. The bus off 0705 Harwich - Colchester 104 continued on 0850 174. The bus off 0736 175 continued on 0835 Colchester - Harwich 104. This arrangement finished when schools returned on 19 April.

Fifteen Volvo B7TLs worked on 103/104 mainly on 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103. In contrast to previous months, more B7TLs worked through to Harwich, possibly due to the Easter school holidays. Up to Good Friday 15 April they were: 37037 (7th), 32629 (8th), 37053 (11th and 13th), 32531 (also 11th), 37006 (12th), 32539 (13th) and 37042 (14th). However, with schools returning on 19 April, only two further B7TLs worked through to Harwich, 32532 on 25th, and 37027 unusual for Holiday Monday 2 May when the Sunday 102 timetable applied.

The service changes of 17 April saw the 0920 Mistley - Colchester 103 replaced by a 0915 Mistley - Colchester 104, with the 1835 103 Colchester - Harwich service replaced by a 104 departing at the same time. Further to the article on routes 103 & 104 in EBM 690, this is a further decline of the 103 route; now on Mondays to Fridays the only 103 journeys are 0715 Harwich - Colchester (0720 in school holidays) and 1535 Colchester - Harwich. There are still two journeys each way on the 103 on Saturdays. The new 0915 104 journey is worked by the bus off 0716 Maldon - Colchester General Hospital 75. On 19 and 20 April, 66801 worked these journeys, but they then changed to B7TL operation with 37004 on 21st and 32532 on 22nd. On Sundays, service 102 still interworks with Colchester - Maldon 75, requiring three buses.

The Harwich services were dominated by all 12 of the ADL Enviro 300s, and all 11 of the Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipses on the Colchester allocation. Only four StreetLites were recorded, including 63338 on 20 April. 63338 reached Harwich again on 26 April, this time on route learning duties for route 102 which also serves Dedham and Parkeston.

Clacton routes. 74B: 32526 (29th), 32530 (6 May), 32532 (19th), 32669 (23rd), 37005 (21st), 37017 (14th, 20th), 37020 (25th), 37027 (4 May), 37034 (26th), 37054 (22nd), 37136 (7 May), 37138 (30th), 63336 (16th), 66872 (12th), 67736 (3 May), 67737 (11th), 67738 (13th, 5 May). No reports for 27 & 28 April.
76 (in date order): 66816 (15th, Good Friday), 67741 (17th), 66760 (18th, Easter Monday), 67736 (24th), 37034 (1 May), 32526 (2 May, Bank Holiday), 32540 (8 May).
Other: 37140 a double-decker on 64A (14th).

Chelmsford

(All vehicles listed below allocated to CF. All dates April 2022.)

66795 was being repaired after being out of use since 2 April, but work seems to have stopped as, since the 17 April changes, there is a surplus of Volvo B7RLEs.

Unusual / Interesting workings.

X10 (before 17 April): Black 67189 (11th).

X30: 32482 (19th), 69432 (20th).

42930 on 371 (23rd).

DS66848 in Rettendon on 19th and in Ingatestone the next day.

Basildon & Hadleigh

(All vehicles listed below allocated to BN except where stated. All dates April 2022 except where stated.)

The leather seats in acquired 33411-16/18-19 are actually dark green rather than black. The interior walls are light green and cream. The cream is reminiscent of Eastern National's ECW bodied Bristol REs, late Bristol FLFs and early Bristol VRs!

A bit of added colour at Hadleigh with the arrival of the four red ex Southampton StreetLites from Colchester and the repaint of 63161 to green. One of the red ones, 63061, has an unusual white on black fleet number on the front (see photo on page 16). When at Southampton black masking was applied at the bottom of the windscreen, with white 'City Red' names. This masking was removed when they arrived at Colchester. However, as previously reported, 63061 also had a 'Covid Mask' on the front and so its fleet number had been placed on the black masking. At Colchester, when the black masking and the 'Covid Mask' were removed, this fleet number was cut out and applied in the normal position.

Since the 17 April service changes, double-deckers are the principal allocation to route 100 (now just Basildon to Lakeside) and the Volvo 7900 hybrids previously on the route are now mainly used on the town shuttle services in order to improve air quality in the town (although they still appear on other routes, including the X10 since it returned to Basildon, occasionally on 100 and more often on 300, the previous Basildon to Chelmsford section of the 100). Prior to the changes, double-deckers had been common on town routes 5 and 8/A, plus the 5A/B extensions to Grays, but now they are very rare on the new shuttle routes (although they continue on the replacement Basildon to Grays route, the 200). Reported on shuttles have been 33418 (1 May), 33544 (18th), 33545 (8 May), 33557 (5 May), 33570 (17th), all on route B1.

Also since the 17 April service revisions, in which the daytime route 9 was reduced to hourly, this route is now almost exclusively double-deck operated with most days either one or no StreetLites in use. Non-Enviro 400 double-deckers reported have been 32249 (14th), 32260 (5th) and 33186 (16th, 25th). Also, green Enviro 400s 33414 (29th, 4 May) and 33419 (5th), and a first, Enviro MMC 33984 (29th). Mini Enviro 44910 was on the route on 3 May.

Routes 94/A continued to be mainly operated by two StreetLites. There has been occasional operation by a mini-Enviro 200, although far less than previously. Only one double-decker seen, recently acquired Enviro 400 MMC 33988 on 19th, its first day in service.

Only two double-deckers reported on route 100 (Basildon to Lakeside section) in the week from EBM 696 publication up to 17 April, green / branded 33412 (11th-14th) and 33413 (12th). Unusual was Enviro 200 MMC 67165 on 11th. As noted above, from 17th, the 100 route number is just for Basildon to Lakeside and is now scheduled to be double-deck operated, so these will no longer be reported, except for unusual vehicles, starting with Basildon's sole remaining Trident / President 33186 on 17th, 23rd and 7 May. 32260 on 30th. Single-deckers 66821 (19th), 67901 (24th) plus occasional use of the previously allocated Volvo 7900 hybrids.

Double-deckers on route 16: 33544 (17th), 33549 (23rd).

Other Unusual / Interesting workings.

Route 251: 33507 (18th, Easter Monday), 44909 (24th).

HH69517 on 27 (22nd).

47651 on X10 (3 May).

53102

Perhaps we put a jinx on former Essex Buses Optare Solo 53102 by describing it as "a remarkable survivor" last month as it has now been withdrawn by First Glasgow after a combined total of 20 years and one month's service with various operators.

Former Colchester Queen Street Depot

The newer extension (at the back) had been demolished by the end of April with the original structure remaining.

With thanks to Robert Appleton, Dale Bell, Stephen Barham, Jack Bennee, Jon Collins, Richard Delahoy, David Edwards, John Lidstone, William Morrison, Gareth Norris, John Podgorski, Ian Ransom, Derek Stebbing, Chris Stewart, Andrew Toms, Robert West, First Essex, Bustimes, Bus Lists on the Web, Facebook, Essex Buses Google group and Terminus.

Right and below: Interior shots of 44471 at Westway on 3 April 2022. The seats are dark blue. The sign on the driver's cab door is from its time at Halton Transport Both **David Edwards**



Below: Colourful Hadleigh. Recently acquired 33750 (see page 11), repainted 63161 (see page 13) before receiving any decals and, on far left, out of service 'Midland' heritage liveried 33404 at Hadleigh depot on 11 April 2022. **John G Lidstone**



First Essex News in Pictures

Service Revisions 17 April

Saturday 16 April 2022 marked the end of 121 years of direct Southend Victoria Circus - Leigh Church transport, so Westcliff & Eastern National liveries were appropriate. John requested HH might provide the three heritage liveried buses 33191, 37985 and 37986 on the day. Traffic Controller Carl Muir not only did so, but ensured 33191 was on the first 26 of the day as well as the final journey east of Southend by First Essex at the end of the day. Also, 37986 ran the penultimate westbound journey, with 37985 on the last of all, as seen heading down Belton Way East to Leigh Station.

Ex-First Southampton City Red 63061 on route 21 at 0752 on 20 April at the top of Belton Way West, only served by the 21 on Sundays and Bank Holidays before the service changes, rammed full to the back of the cab from the back window (it's the busy school journey which used to be double-deck 822 plus a 26). This was also showing the 'reversed' screen (see pages 22-23), but not when passing the camera. Note the white on black fleet number (see page 14).

63161 is the first StreetLite and the first Hadleigh vehicle to receive green Essex Bus livery. Unlike other single-deckers to receive this livery, it does not have any dark green relief at the front. It makes an interesting comparison to the red SL above. On route 28 at London Road, Leigh on 29 April. No change to this service, but a new livery and new blind layout. On the nearside, the fleet name (in smaller size) is on the cove panels above the first window.

All this page **John G Lidstone**



Since the 17 April changes, the Volvo 7900 Hybrids 69901-19 are mainly allocated to Basildon local routes B1-B5. Prior to this, they mainly worked route 100; the Basildon to Lakeside section of this is now predominantly double-deck operated and the Basildon to Chelmsford section, now the 300, is worked by a variety of single-deckers although there are still appearances of 69901-19 on both these routes. Before the changes, most days did see a few of these vehicles on local routes, as demonstrated by 69911 on service 8 at Laindon High Road on 7 April 2022.

Chris Stewart



66759, numerically the oldest Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse in the First Essex fleet and one of only two left at Basildon, on new route B5 at Pitsea Broadway on 19 April.

Richard Delahoy



Route number 200 has been revived for the Basildon to Grays service, replacing 5A/B. So now, 100 is Basildon to Lakeside, 200 is Basildon to Grays and 300 is Basildon to Chelmsford. At one time there were over 20 Dennis Trident / Plaxton Presidents allocated to Basildon, but that figure is now down to a solitary one, 33186, seen leaving the Bus Station headed for Grays on 19 April.

Richard Delahoy



Enviro 200 44546 on route C10, C for Chelmsford, to City Centre, with Chelmsford City as a fleet name, approaching Chelmsford Railway Station with Chelmsford Cathedral in the background. First day of new service, 17 April.

David Moth



Since service revisions last year, route 42A has been reduced from a daily service to a Sunday / Bank Holiday only one, although there is also just one journey a day in each direction on Mondays to Fridays. Whereas the Sunday service goes as far as Bishop's Stortford, the school day service only goes to Takeley, as seen by Enviro 200 MMC 67171 crossing Parkway, Chelmsford, on 19 April, with its new blind featuring a reduced sized 'A'.

Richard Delahoy



A number of Darts have survived to operate on the new routes, although 42945 on route C3 has broken down at North Melbourne on 19 April, with its passengers being picked up by Enviro 200 44548 behind, on the same route.

Richard Delahoy



At first sight this photo of Enviro 300 67756 at Wivenhoe Station bound for Highwoods, Tesco may appear to be on long-standing service 61. But it is actually on the replacement S1, which follows the same route. Seen three days after the service revisions, on 20 April.

David Moth



StreetLite 63342 had worked St Michaels - High Street S7, then High Street - Monkwick - Bus Station S8, and is seen here departing the Bus Station on an S6 to Shrub End on 19 April.

Robert Appleton



The flags were out in Colchester High Street to mark the new services or they might have been to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Barbie liveried 32269 on 19 April on route 87, the extended replacement for route 62 to Brightlingsea (more details next page).

Robert Appleton



Acquired Vehicle

Three of the four Enviro 200s delivered to Westway on 3 April 2022 were in grey but the fourth was white. 44467 (YX12 DHE) on the day of delivery, next to Volvo B7TL / Transbus 32483.

David Edwards



New Route

On top of the service revisions of 17 April, First Essex also took on operation of Amazon routes Z3 (from SBC Leisure) and Z4 (from Ensignbus) on that day, both operated by Hadleigh depot. 36216 is seen on Z3 in Southchurch Boulevard on the first day, approaching the first stop on the route.

Richard Delahoy

A photo of SBC Leisure Scania N270UU / Optare YT10 WKZ on the route was on the rear cover of EBM 688 (August 2021).



De-branded

One spin off of the new services from 17 April is that, as the 62 group routes no longer exist, the branding for them on green fronted Volvo B9TL / Wrightbus Eclipse Gemini 37133-6/8-9 has been removed. 37139 is seen in Colchester Bus Station on 26 April on new route 87, the replacement for route 62, now extended beyond North Station to Horkesley Heath. Note the running board number in the windscreen (see page 13).

Adam Kelleher



Acquired Driver Shuttle Van

An acquired driver shuttle vehicle at Chelmsford is Ford Tourneo Custom MT19 CZD, seen at the bus station on 17 April.

Adam Kelleher



New Driver Trainer

As reported in the last two EBM's Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse 66825 is now in use as a driver trainer. It is seen, with two L plates on the front, in Crouch Street, Colchester on 28 April.

Alan Moore

To clarify the reports in EBM's 695/6, this bus is indeed a full driver trainer conversion, with cut away rear cab bulkhead and fitment of instructor's seat and is not just a normal bus being used for driver training. For some reason, when it received Urban livery in 2017 it did not have a magenta stripe applied.



Christmas in April

As reported in EBM 695, Enviro 300 67741 retained its Christmas wrap well into February but was then seen on 4 March 2022 with the bottom half removed but the top half still in place. It remains in this condition, as seen on new route S3 to West Bergholt in Colchester Bus Station, also on 28 April.

Alan Moore

A photo of this bus in full Christmas wrap was on page 17 of EBM 692.



First Essex Blinds were changed in line with the service changes from 17 April 2022

These were changed for all routes (except X30), including those routes that did not have any amendments made that day. The big surprise was that route numbers moved from nearside back to offside. During the 2010s route numbers had gradually been moved from the offside to the nearside. Hadleigh depot lasted with offside numbers for much longer than other depots, but these were finally changed towards the end of 2017. Route numbers have also been increased in size to provide a 'chunkier' appearance. Previously, for example, the number zero was 3 pixels wide with 3 pixels top and bottom, now they are 4 and 5 respectively. The downside of this is reduced space between route numbers and destination, so the overall appearance on some routes looks a bit squashed. The size of letters in destinations has not been changed, these are still 2 pixels wide with 2 at top and bottom, similarly via points are 1/1. Via points are now above, rather than below, the destination and the word "via" has been removed. These still switch every few seconds. On many routes, the number of via points seems to have been increased. An extreme example is route 300 between Chelmsford and Basildon. After the 100 was split into Chelmsford to Basildon and Basildon to Lakeside sections, the former did not display any via points. The replacement 300 now shows (in pairs): "Wood St Tesco, Galleywood; Stock, Billericay; Noak Bridge, Pipp's Hill". Letters in route numbers, both prefixes and suffixes, have been reduced to half size, e.g. 'c1'. Again X30 not changed, although X10 has been.

Caption for bottom two photos on opposite page: From 17 April, service 21 was diverted away from several areas it has recently served, one being Blenheim / Westcliff schools, apart from a very few schooltime duties, which do not show a different route number. As a result, the new-style display uses the positive / negative alternating style to highlight when the route is via the school. The new-style display was shown at midday on 16 April on 47643 in Rectory Grove, Leigh. Furthermore, some vehicles on school journeys have been seen with an 'S' on a yellow piece of paper in the windscreen, as shown right on 63061 on 20 April, although this seems to have been a short-lived initiative.

These three photos **John G Lidstone**, all others **Adam Kelleher**.

Below and right: 44080 on the first day of the revised services, 17 April 2022, in Duke Street, Chelmsford, opposite the bus station. On route C5. Note the half-size 'c' and the 'via' point of "Continues to Writtle C4", although the bus is facing the wrong direction and actually drove off with C7 on the blinds!



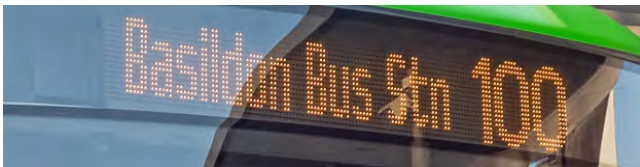
69901 is seen on 17 April 2014, exactly eight years before the 2022 changes, with only one pixel width on destinations and only two width (with two at top and bottom) on route numbers. Also with scrolling via points.



69901 again, on 17 September 2019, prior to the split of route 100 at Basildon, now with two pixel width on destinations (still one on vias) and three width (with three at top and bottom) on route numbers. Also now with alternate via points but still including the word "via".



After the split, and no via points shown on 69914 on the Chelmsford to Basildon section, with resulting larger destination. 24 March 2022.



17 April 2022, and the Chelmsford to Basildon section of 100 renumbered 300. Larger route numbers (as described in text above), route number now on offside, via points now above destination and the word "via" dropped. 69904.



From 17 April 2022, "Not in Service" has been reduced from filling the screen to allow a 'via' point above it, which alternates between what's shown here and "www.firstbus.co.uk". 44541 on 17th.



47643 on route 21 on 16 April 2022, the day before the service revisions, but with the blind already updated. More details in the caption on the previous page. Note, like the photo of route 300 above, there is little space between the route number and destination.



Withdrawn Vehicle

584 PJ02 REU

Volvo B7TL / Plaxton President - withdrawn at CN. Remaining B7TL Presidents are 500/565/573/586-7.

Significant Allocations

514	HD - KN	by 22 April
514	KN - HD	by 28 April
521	KN - CN	by 21 April
817	CN - KN	by 16 April

Fleet News

642 (LK08 FLN) was spotted returned to service after around a month of absence, seen working the X76 in Pier Avenue on 23 April. Update to report in EBM 696 last month, 292 (EU59 AFF) has been at CN long term to have major mechanical work undertaken on the front axle. It is not known if repaint will follow. 284 (OU57 FGX) was officially transferred to Go East Anglia from Carousel in mid-April last year but is yet to turn a wheel in revenue earning service. It was at HD having flooring work undertaken then was transferred to CN, but has languished in the corner of the Engineering yard for several months, a strange anniversary of not being available for service.

Service News

Due to Essex and Suffolk Easter school holidays being over different weeks, when Suffolk schools remained open w/c 4 April, there were alterations to routes 84, 23, 754 & 756. School day timetables operated but route 84 0657 Sudbury to Colchester terminated at Osborne Street and the 1545 ex Norman Way did not operate. Route 236 the 0557 Sudbury to Clare did not operate. Route 754 the 1534 journey called into Thomas Gainsborough School at 1621. Route 756 did not operate. Routes 84 and 754 also had alterations w/c 18 April when Suffolk schools were closed and Essex were open.

During 22 and 23 April a road closure between Bures and Great Cornard meant all 754 buses diverted via the 784 route.

During 7 to 24 April a road closure near Lawshall caused the 375 not to serve Lawshall. The Corbeau Seats Tendring Rally caused the Marine Parade West to be closed to traffic from Tower Road to Wash Lane causing disruption to service 4.

With thanks to John Podgorski and the Hedingham website.

Top right: As noted above, 584 (PJ02 REU) has now been withdrawn. It is seen on service 89 in Halstead High Street on 14 April 2021 when working from Sible Hedingham depot. 584 spent its working life in LT red and grey livery. East Yorkshire sister 588 (PJ02 RBY) continues in service but still in East Yorkshire livery. **Mark Lloyd**

Right: Also still in East Yorkshire livery, although to a different design from 588, is 586 (X584 EGG), seen leaving Colchester Bus Station on route 63 on 28 April 2022.

Alan Moore





Dealer Stock Movements April 2022

Vehicles In

From **Bear Buses**: Volvo B9TL LX60 DWW

From **First South West**: Volvo B7TL LJ05 BKK

From **First Essex**: Darts SN05 DZO/EAF, WX05 SVE; Volvo B7RLEs MX05 CEF/CCZ; Trident LN51 GMG - these were FE fleet numbers, in order, 42933, 42927, 42939, 66819, 66808, 33086. These all then went to Shelton Motors for scrap, see below. Also see page 13.

From **First South Yorkshire**: Volvo B7TL YN53 EOC

From **Go Ahead London**: Enviro 400 SN06 BNA

From **RATP TOLST**: Volvo B7L LX05 HSC

From **Stagecoach Highlands**: Volvo B9Rs KX58 NCN/O

From **Translink**: Scania K400s LFZ 8052/3

Vehicles Out

Aintree Coaches: Scania K320 JFZ 9036

Avondale, Glasgow: Dart BA52 GHA. This is a correction to EBM 696, also see next page.

Bear Buses, Feltham Middlesex: Volvo B7TL LX54 GZE

Bullocks Coaches, Manchester: Scania NK56 KHW

English Riviera Tours, Torquay: DAF DB250 LF52 URK

Faresaver Buses, Chippenham: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CWZ/CXB

First South West (converted half open top): Volvo B9TLs LK59 CXL/O/P

First Scotland East (converted to half open top): Enviro 400 LJ09 CBU/CBX/CAO

Fowlers Coaches, Holbeach Drove, Lincolnshire: Volvo B7TL LF52 ZPP

Galleon Travel: Scania K320 JFZ 7018, Enviro 200 LX09 AZL. Also see next page.

Happy Als, Liverpool: Volvo B9TL LX60 DWW

Herberts Travel, Shefford, Beds: Volvo B9TL SN59 BGK

Heyfordian, Bicester: Scania K320s JFZ 7016/22/29

Lower Reule Farm, Stafford: Scania NK56 KKF

Mario Coaches, Burnley: Volvo B9TLs LK59 CXM/CWO

The Red Bistro Co, Glasgow: RML 2482

To Shelton Motors for scrap

Volvo B7TL LX54 GZD,

Darts SN05

DZO/EAF/WX05 SVE, Volvo

B7RLEs MX05 CEF/CCZ,

Trident LN51 GMG

Ensignbus Fleet

BCI 142 (LX17 DZC) sold to Aintree Coaches.

Right: Sister to 142, 146 (LX17 DZG) in Usk Road, Aveley on 28 March 2022.

Keith Shayshutt

With thanks to Ross Newman.



Corrections to EBM 696

Transbus Mini Pointer Dart BA52 GHA was NOT acquired from Ensignbus. Instead this vehicle has been sold by Ensignbus to Avondale, Glasgow. Following long delays, the second MetroDecker 2102 (CT71 GAL) is not now to be acquired, so please delete from the fleet list. It was planned to be used on contract and private hire work and this is now to be covered by coaches. In this regard, former Ulsterbus Scania K230IB4 / Irizar IFZ 7018 has been acquired from Ensignbus for the Galleon coach fleet.

Acquired Vehicle

LX09 AZL Alexander Dennis Enviro 200 / Optare (East Lancs) Esteem, B29D, new to London General SOE25 06/09 From Ensignbus. No fleet number yet reported, but logically this would be 1303. First seen with Central Connect on 12 April, still in all-over London red with TfL roundel and a blank destination screen. Fitted with LED blinds towards the end of April. Photo below.

Repaint

Enviro 200 1401 (LX07 BYA) has been repainted from all red into fleet livery and fitted with LED blinds.

General

Four of the five Optare Tempos, 1502-5 (Y111 EHO/S/W/G), have been advertised for sale on eBay.

The fifth, 1501 (Y111 EHG), is being stripped for spares after colliding with a Scania double-decker in the yard sometime last year.

Further to last month's list, no fleet numbers have yet been seen applied to vehicles.

Further to EBMs 694-696, Enviro 200s 1401 and 1404 (SN57 DWZ) have finally entered service, the former on 20 April after repaint, as noted above, the latter in early April. 1404 still carries its Go Ahead fleet number, SE33.

Scania N230UD / OmniCity YP59 OEO was on route 14 on 26 April. A double-decker seems to be fairly regular on route 410 on Saturdays, similar YP59 OES was seen on 9 April, with OEU on 16th and OET on 23rd.

With thanks to John Card, Robert Downton, Tony Higgs, Owen Woodliffe, Allan White and LOTS.

Below: Newly acquired LX09 AZL travels westward down Bridleway North, Hoddesdon on 12 April 2022. **Allan White**



During the Easter holidays for Suffolk schools, 9-24 April, the DAF DB250 / East Lancs Lowlanders were not used, and only two of the Scania N94UD / East Lancs OmniDekkas 61/62 (PJ54 YZU/V) were used on services 92/93/A, on 12/13/14 April. Thus most double-deck workings were in the hands of the newer Scania OmniCities. These services also saw more single-deck workings than on schooldays: Ipswich - Manningtree 92:

ADL Enviro 200: 75 (GD10 MVM) on 12 and 13 April, 72 (LX58 LMM) on 21 April, 83 (KX58 GUW) on 23 April

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse: 161 (SN57 DCX) on 11 April.

Ipswich - Colchester 93/A:

ADL Enviro 200: 75 & 76 (LX58 LML) both on 23 April

Mercedes Citaro: 155 (BF65 HVV) on 11 and 22 April

Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipse: 160 (SN57 DDF) on 22 April.

Colchester routes 4 & 11 were also served by Volvo B7RLE / Wrightbus Eclipses, replacing an Enviro 200 on some days: 160 on 12 and 19 April, 161 on 13 April. Then on 14 April, 160 and 161 replaced both Enviro 200s normally allocated. On 3 May 161 worked 4 & 11 again, together with Enviro 200 75.

Clacton - Mistley 2/A kept its normal allocation of an 8.9 long Enviro 200 except for two days, when 10.8m long Enviro 200s were used: 75 on 16 April, 83 on 21 April.

In recent weeks the 1645 Ipswich - Colchester 93 and 1810 Colchester - Ipswich 93 has been regularly worked by an Enviro 200 instead of a double-decker, but on 3 May Mercedes Citaro 154 (BF65 HVT) was used instead.

Further to EBM 695, Optare Solo 245 (Y105 XNY) has been acquired by Lodge Coaches, High Easter, see page 7. The other Solo, 241 (YN04 LWK), has been acquired by Vectare, first seen with them on service 61 (Brentwood to Blackmore) on 3 May, photo on page 6.

With thanks to Chris Stewart, Ipswich Buses Enthusiast FB Group, Ipswich Transport Society Journal, Ipswich Buses website, Bustimes.

Below: As reported last month, Optare Tempo SR 97 (YJ12 GWO), with pink Chantry Connexions branding for service 13, was a very unusual allocation on 1645 Ipswich - Colchester - Colchester and 1810 Colchester - Ipswich 93 on 7 March 2022. Seen in Middleborough, at the bottom of North Hill, Colchester. **James Cole**



Other Operators

by Roger A Smith

Airport Bus Express, Stansted Airport

A recent arrival here is BN17 JHH, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo C53FT, formerly with Waterson, Badsworth, West Yorkshire.

Kelly's Travel, Nazeing

GL14 PUL, a Mercedes-Benz Tourismo C53FT new to Pulham's of Bourton on the Water, is here from Grange Travel, Gravesend, Kent.

M&M Staffing, Cooksmill Green

Neoplan N2216, registration OU18 ZSX, C57FT, is reported as here from Spencer Graham Coaches, Silloth, Cumbria.

SBC Engineering, Leigh-on-Sea

Brand new here are Mercedes-Benz Tourimos HP22 SBC and MP22 SBC (see photo below), both C55FT.

With thanks to the PSV Circle.



Allan White went to Wembley on 16 April, not to watch the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Manchester City, but to do his first bit of coach spotting there since the pandemic. There were a lot of changes in the area around the stadium and a brand new purpose built coach park. Most of the coaches were of course from the north of England, but Allan managed to photograph a couple of coaches from Essex carrying Liverpool supporters, both SBC Engineering, brand new Mercedes-Benz Tourismo MP22 SBC, as seen above, and similar, but tri-axle, MC20 SBC.

As there is a bit of space available on this page, right is Allan's photo taken the same day of the area where the old coach park used to be. Note the arch of the stadium top left.

More photos from Wembley in next month's magazine.



70 years ago this month, Eastern National dramatically reduced in size when its Midland area operations were transferred to United Counties, along with 239 buses and coaches. This is an introduction to that story.

In the 1920s the National Omnibus & Transport Company (NOTC) expanded rapidly and established operations not only in Essex but across Bedfordshire and adjoining counties, and in the south-west. What became the Midland Section of EN started with operations in Bedford in 1919, under an agreement with the LGOC who had operated there prior to the First World War. When the Railways Act of 1928 gave the 'big four' railway companies that had emerged from the 1923 grouping formal powers to operate bus services, they did so almost entirely by buying into established bus companies, including the NOTC, usually by taking a 50% shareholding. Hence the operations in the west country were split into Southern National and Western National - the areas not reflecting geography so much as the territories of the respective railway companies, the Southern Railway and the Great Western Railway. This created a rather odd situation in particular for Southern National, which operated in two entirely separate areas with no actual connection between them - North Cornwall/North Devon (where it operated *north* of Western National) and Dorset.

For the Essex and Bedfordshire operations, it was not so straightforward as the two railway companies involved - LMS (London, Midland & Scottish) and LNER (London & North Eastern Railway) - had less clear cut territories, for example the LMS owning the London Tilbury and Southend line in the heart of LNER land, whilst in northern part of the NOTC's operations there was an LNER line through LMS territory to Dunstable, and the LMS ran from Bedford to Cambridge, into the heart of LNER land. No suitable split of bus operations could be identified and hence there was never a "Midland National" (although the name was registered to protect rights to it, as was Northern National) and instead, the LMS and LNER each took a 25% shareholding in the newly constituted Eastern National (the LNER contributing the "Eastern" part of the new name), operating through two separate areas, as this 1938 timetable extract explains:

EASTERN NATIONAL
TIME AND FARE TABLES

TIME TABLES

The attention of the Public is drawn to the fact that the Company's Official Time Table Booklets are published in two parts (price 2d. each), as under:—

MIDLAND SECTION

Covering the **BEDFORD, LUTON, and AYLESBURY** areas, and serving, in entirety or in part, the Counties of **Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire.**

EASTERN SECTION

Covering the **CHELMSFORD, COLCHESTER, CLACTON, GRAYS and SOUTHEND** areas, and serving, in entirety or in part, the Counties of **Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire.**

Copies of Time Table Booklets, for both Sections, are available from all of the Company's Enquiry Offices (for addresses see page 1), and from any of the Omnibus Conductors.

The Midland section thus covered a wide area, with bus services reaching Amersham, Aylesbury, Oxford, Northampton, Kettering, Somersham, St Ives and Cambridge. The two sections were geographically separate, with London Transport's Country Area forming a barrier between them, and, to an extent, Eastern Counties territory likewise prevented the two separate sections from joining up.

There was only one bus route that linked the Eastern and Midland areas, the infrequent 164 which, latterly, ran from Bishops Stortford to Royston via Standon and Buntingford, albeit with only one through journey a day. (A second route, 40, from Wicken and Royston, ran for only 13 months in 1938/9).



A pre-war timetable book cover shows the “associated with the LMS and LNE Railways” wording. And surprisingly, during the war a two-colour cover was able to be used for the 1943 edition. Then from 1944 a glorious full colour cover appeared, as illustrated on the next page.



The operation of the separate Midland and Eastern Sections continued through the 1930s and 1940s but the voluntary sale of the Tilling Group (who owned the other 50% shareholding in EN) to the State and the forced nationalisation of the ‘big four’ railways companies, both in 1948, brought all the shares under common ownership. A number of rationalisation schemes were then developed, for example affecting EN in Grays (a story for another day - see further reading below about the transfer of services to London Transport) but what’s relevant here is that the Midland Section of EN was transferred to United Counties (also state owned and part of the Tilling Group), then a company of just under 300 buses/coaches based in Northampton and operating north and west of EN’s Midland Section, almost doubling the size of UCOC but at a stroke halving EN. The transfer involved 239 operational buses/coaches, plus service vehicles and some withdrawn buses, plus 7 depots and a further 7 outstations, operating over 110 bus routes and various summer express services. The value of the assets transferred was £619,529 (around £20m in today’s values). It included EN’s 50% share in the Co-ordination scheme with Luton Corporation and joint operations with London Transport on the 359, Aylesbury to Amersham.

The transfer took effect from 1 May 1952 and the vehicles involved comprised:

Single deck:

11 Dennis Lancet	20 Bristol JO
8 Bedford OWB/OB	51 Bristol L/LL/LWL
4 Leyland Lion/Tiger	

Double deck:

42 Leyland Titan TD/PD series
103 Bristol K/KS/KSW
Total = 239.

Tellingly, in his history of United Counties, Roger Warwick commented that “there seems to be little doubt that Eastern National engineered their fleet disposition over the months preceding the transfer to ensure that a greater proportion of elderly vehicles would pass to United Counties than a just allocation would have allowed”! Indeed, the buses transferred included a few that dated back to NOTC days and five dating back to 1929/30 had Bedford registrations, before administration had been centralised at Chelmsford. The fleet was immediately renumbered into a new UCOC numbering scheme but the services continued with their EN route numbers until a comprehensive renumbering took place in March 1953. So, apart from the many buses with Essex registration marks, there was then little left to remind anyone of EN’s tenure in Bedfordshire and surrounding counties between 1919 and 1952.

Eastern National was soon to expand in size again as it assumed control of and then absorbed completely Westcliff Motor Services in a process that started in mid-1952 and concluded early in 1955, a story for another day.

The covers of EN's timetable books of the post-war era featured very attractive maps on the front (Eastern Section) and back (Midland Section); this is the rear cover of the last issue before the split, dated 16 March 1952.





One of the oldest buses transferred to United Counties, allocated number 103 but not used by them, was EN's 3490 (AVW 468) a 1934-built Dennis Lancet with an Eastern Counties body. The destination - Wilstead - is a small village south of Bedford and terminus of route 30, which became UCOC service 113. The "Q here" sign on the wall refers to services to Hitchin and Whipsnade Zoo, so the location must be Bedford Omnibus Station. The photo is undated and, unusually, the EN fleet number plate is missing, with 3490 painted or perhaps chalked on the dash where the plate would usually be. **EBEG collection**



From the mid-1930s, Eastern National had inevitably standardised on Bristol / ECW buses, here in the form of 3873 (GPU 435), a Bristol L5G of 1938. Pictured after the takeover, it sports United Counties name and fleet number 260 and was withdrawn in 1957.

The destination / passing point blinds lack a route number but show Biggleswade via Henlow and Southill - if correct, these suggest service 185 (formerly 8E), a mainly works service to Letchworth. It is in Biggleswade.

Richard Delahoy collection



Perhaps one of the more unexpected disposals of the EN buses that transferred to United Counties involved Bristol K JEV 419, which was sold in 1961 on to Luton Corporation, along with sisters JEV 416/426. By chance, whilst compiling this article, this shot of it with Luton fleet number 89 and town crest showing was amongst a batch that **Michael Dryhurst** e-mailed to me. They lasted with Luton CT until 1965, outlasting by some margin those that remained with UCOC.



The last ex-Eastern National bus to remain in use with United Counties was JEV 420, converted to a tree lopper in April 1962. It was posed for photos on a Group tour visiting UCOC's Bedford depot on 28 September 1975, just in time, as it was withdrawn that month. It was however not disposed of until over a year later, to PVS at Barnsley, for scrap, inevitably.

A 1940 built Bristol K5G, JEV 420 had been rebodied by ECW in 1951 with this 8' wide body (on a 7' 6" chassis). It was numbered 681 in the UCOC fleet, becoming number 7 on conversion to a tree lopper (which it carries in this photo despite being renumbered again, to 1007, in 1974).



The top deck interior shot shows the fold out platform for staff to work from in reaching trees at the roadside (and how the forward part of the sunken gangway was covered over to give a level working area). **Richard Delahoy**

Further reading

An Illustrated History of United Counties - Part 6, Acquisition of Midland Area of Eastern National, Roger Warwick, published in 1982 is an 82-page A5 book providing a very detailed description of all aspects of the takeover.
 Glory Days, Eastern National - Chapter 6
 PSV Circle Fleet Histories of Eastern National.



The following are in our archives and pdf copies can be e-mailed on request to Richard Delahoy:

ENEG, EP36, Eastern National, Co-Ordination of services in Luton, 1949
 ENEG EP19, Allocation list and fleet list for the Midland Section, July 1949
 ENEG, EP16, Eastern National, Renumbering of services by United Counties, 1953
 ENEG, EP11, List of United Counties services in 1947 and as renumbered in 1953
 ENEG news-sheet 41, List of former EN vehicles still in use by United Counties as at May 1967
 ENEG news-sheet 176, History of Service 164, Royston to Bishops Stortford, linking Eastern & Midland Areas
 EBEG magazines, surveys of former EN depots: Hitchin (issue 514), Huntingdon (543), Toddington outstation (551), Bedford (666)
 EBEG magazine 588, notes on the centenary of the Wellingborough Omnibus Company.

And describing the transfer of services in the **Grays Area** to LT:

ENEG, Eastern National, Transfer of Grays area to London Transport 1933-1951 (booklet, 40 pages, A4)
 EBEG magazines, articles in issues 592, 594, 595.

The following books/magazines also cover the same events but we are unable to provide copies for copyright reasons:

Glory Days, Eastern National - Chapter 5

London Bus Magazine, Issue 20

London Buses in the 1950s, Ken Glazier - Chapter 8

Classic Bus magazine, article in issue 57

Country Buses Vol 2, 1950-1959, Laurie Akehurst - Chapter 3.



ESSEX BUS MAGAZINE Issue 697 May 2022
Reporting the Essex bus scene since 1964