

East Lothian bus services saved by Lothian Bus

✘ Bus services in East Lothian have been under threat but appear to have been saved by East Coast Buses Ltd which is a subsidiary of Lothian Buses.

First Scotland East announced that they would withdraw the services they run out to East Lothian in August. Now a deal has been struck by which East Coast Buses will buy two properties in Musselburgh and North Berwick from First. All staff have the chance to transfer to East Coast Buses Ltd under the usual employment rules.

East Coast Buses will invest in the properties and the services will be provided by more and newer vehicles.

Richard Hall, Managing Director of Lothian Buses, said:

“This deal will protect key bus services and jobs but the benefits go much further than that. The residents, workers and businesses of East Lothian rely on buses for their daily lives and well-being. We are pleased to be in a position to take on and continue providing these vital services and be part of the local economy.”

Paul McGowan, Managing Director, First Scotland East Ltd, said:

“Throughout our consultation into the future of bus services in East Lothian our priority was to safeguard jobs and protect key services. I am therefore pleased that we have achieved that through the proposed sale to Lothian Buses.”

"I'd like to thank all my colleagues in East Lothian for their hard work and loyalty over the years. We will be fully supporting them as they transfer to their new employer.

"We are proud to have served the East Lothian community and would like to thank passengers for travelling with First Scotland East over the years. I can assure our customers that we will continue to run services as normal up to and including 13th August and will ensure a smooth transition."

Humza Yousaf, Minister for Transport and the Islands said:

"The announcement Lothian Buses are acquiring First's operations in East Lothian is welcome news for the communities who have expressed their desire to see these vital bus services maintained.

"Importantly, this also safeguards jobs at the Musselburgh and North Berwick depots and is an excellent outcome from the constructive and open approach taken by both companies and the Council in dealing with this matter.

"I look forward to hearing how Lothian Buses works in partnership with the relevant local authorities to make a success of its new services."

East Coast Buses Ltd will introduce the following services from 14 August 2016:

- **107** – New 60 minute timetable introduced on all days running (30 minute Mon-Fri peak). Buses run West End, Meadowbank, The Jewel, A1, Haddington and East Linton to Dunbar. This part-replaces First Service X6/106.
- **124/X24**– New 30 minute timetable introduced Monday to Saturday and 60 minute on Sundays. Buses run Semple Street, Meadowbank, Portobello, Musselburgh, Prestonpans, Longniddry, Aberlady, Gullane and Dirleton to North Berwick. 3 x morning and afternoon buses run Limited Stop as X24. This part-replaces First Bus 124/X24.
- The following commercial and school services will be continued:

– **124** – 1x morning and 1x afternoon journey between Longniddry and Preston Lodge HS.

– **125** – 2x morning and 2x afternoon journeys between Musselburgh and North Berwick HS.

– **126** – 1x morning and 1x afternoon journey between Aberlady and North Berwick HS.

– **127** – 1x morning and 1x afternoon journey between Longniddry and North Berwick HS.

A comprehensive marketing and communications plan will be put in place to prepare the new services for operation, including roadshows within the local communities. This work will be done in close co-operation with East Lothian Council.