



ONE A DECADE

The line-up will encompass double-deckers and artics along with single-deckers, with the first battery-electric models scheduled to appear on this side of the Channel late in the first quarter of 2022, or early in the second quarter. They will be fitted with a 300kW electric motor driving through a two-speed gearbox and powered by either eight or ten lithium-ion batteries. The manufacturer was unable to give details of the range between recharges at the time of writing.

The entire electric drivetrain has been conceived using Scania technology. The batteries have been developed in cooperation with Northvolt, which has Scania as a major investor, and Scania is building a €100m (£87m) battery assembly plant next door to its headquarters and factory in Sweden. Northvolt will make the cells and Scania will put together the battery modules and packs. A battery research and development laboratory will form part of the operation as Scania looks to electrify its truck as well as its bus portfolio.

The new modular-chassis Fencers will use is fitted with new independent front suspension plus a new rigid front axle and a redesigned electrical system. The chassis will be sold to body builders, too.

Scania has chosen the UK for the worldwide launch of its new Fencer bus range, its first for 10 years. It employs a European chassis with bodies built in China in conjunction with Higer in a standalone facility, reports Steve Banner

The f1 is the first Fencer to appear, and is the first complete Scania-bodied single-decker to be released in the UK for ten years. The big surprise in the current climate is that it is being produced with diesel engines as well as in battery-electric guise. "We believe there will still be a market for vehicles using very clean, efficient, diesel technology for some years to come," says Scania's UK bus and coach and power solutions director, Martin West.

Power comes courtesy of a DC09 139 9.0-litre 276bhp diesel with 1,400Nm of torque on tap, married to a ZF EcoLife 2 six-speed automatic gearbox with an integral retarder. Fencer f1 is also available with the DC07 113 7.0-litre diesel, again at 276bhp and married to EcoLife 2, but with 1,200Nm of torque. All Scania diesels can run on HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) without any modifications.

Fencers will also be marketed with hybrid, BioCNG (compressed natural gas) and BioLNG (liquefied natural gas) options, with hydrogen fuel cells in the pipeline for the future.

Offered at either 10.9m or 12.2m, the body can carry 38 seated passengers and 39 standees, or 45 seated and 29 standees respectively. Fencer f1's body features deep windows, widespread use of LED lighting and a driver area which has been redesigned to make it easier to reach the controls. Rear-view cameras are available as an option instead of conventional exterior mirrors.

Support for Fencer will be delivered through the Scania dealer network of 84 UK service centres, 20 of which will carry stocks of Higer parts.

Bus and coach sales have been hit hard by the pandemic, says West, with coach firms in particular severely affected thanks to the collapse in tour demand. "Hopefully the industry will see an upturn during the second half of this year," he observes. It will be some time, however, before Britain sees a return to the average annual running rate of 3,200 bus and coach registrations, he believes.

Last year saw registrations slump to just 1,376 according to figures compiled by the SMMT. The market could be about the same size this year, he says. [TE](#)