

Abellio to bring railway and bus services back under UK ownership

A quartet of rail operators across the West and East Midlands, Merseyside and Anglia will be back under UK ownership by the end of this year. Abellio UK has announced a management buyout (MBO) from its state-owned, Dutch parent company Nederlandse Spoorwegen and created [a new UK-based operator](#) called Transport UK Group.

Abellio UK owns and operates West Midlands Trains, which comprises the West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway brands, Merseyrail, East Midlands Railway and Greater Anglia. It also operates more than 50 London bus routes under Abellio Bus London which are also included in the MBO.

The MBO, which is being led by managing director Dominic Booth, is still subject to approval from partners including the Department for Transport, Transport for London and Merseytravel as well as regulatory consent from the Office for Rail and Road.

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Mr Booth said: "I've been a railwayman all my life. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to return key public transport services back into UK ownership at a time when some of our competitors look destined for overseas ownership.

"We expect the business to transfer by the end of the year, following which we will focus all our energies and expertise

on continuing to deliver the best possible services for our passengers, investing in our train and bus routes, and helping to develop a future-ready, low-emission UK transport network.

“Our wish to buy the company from Nederlandse Spoorwegen demonstrates our confidence in the existing Abellio UK team, both in our head office and on the ground. It’s the dedication of our 15,000 employees, together with a continuity of management, that will ensure our new company is a great success.

“We are grateful for the support and backing that we have received from Nederlandse Spoorwegen to date and we look forward to continuing to work closely with them to manage this process to a successful conclusion.

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“This deal will put us in a strong position to continue the smooth operation of our current routes as well as giving us the capability to grow the business and bid for new franchises in the future. Beyond that, we are, and will continue to be, thought leaders in our sector determined to play a long-term and vital role in the future of UK transport.”

Nederlandse Spoorwegen has decided to withdraw from the UK market after 20 years operating here to focus on domestic and international railway services to and from the Netherlands.

It will continue to support Transport UK Group during the transition period.

Acting chief executive Bert Groenewegen said: “After a successful 20 years in the UK passenger transport market, Nederlandse Spoorwegen is proud to support this natural next step for Abellio UK as it transitions with our blessing into a new management-owned passenger transport group.”