

New Go-Ahead owner reveals plans for London

Go-Ahead's new joint-owners are "ready to invest" in improved rail and bus services for London, bosses of the two companies have said.

The consortium said it hoped to accelerate the transport operator's growth plans, adding decisions about London's services would ultimately be a matter for TfL.

Michael Swards, Co-CEO of Kinetic, told the Standard: "We look to Go-Ahead as the world's standard in terms of how it operates."

"We believe our offer is extremely appealing – we intend to support the company and push it forward in particular with regional buses and train operations."

[Yesterday, Go-Ahead's board unanimously recommended a £650 million takeover](#) offer from the two companies.

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The consortium said it would focus on delivering Go-Ahead's ESG targets by investing in a rapid transition away from the company's diesel bus fleet.

Kinetic and Globalvia said Go-Ahead would continue to be run as a standalone UK-based business with headquarters in Newcastle and London, while the chairman and CEO would remain in post.

In February, the government stripped Go-Ahead of the Southeaster franchise, which runs routes between London, Sussex and Kent, over a "serious breach of trust" after the operator was found not to have declared over £25 million in taxpayer funding related to the franchise agreement.

Go-Ahead said it set aside £30 million in anticipation of a Department for Transport fine.

Javier Pérez Fortea, CEO of Globalvia, told the Standard: "We have analysed it in depth and we are comfortable with the way it has been handled by the company."

"The new management have been totally transparent with government – we believe this has been put behind them."

Go-Ahead is one of London's largest transport operators, running the Thameslink, Southern and Gatwick Express services via its controlling stake in Govia Thameslink. Go-Ahead also runs a number of European rail franchises, with contracts in Germany and Norway. It recently expanded its international bus business into southern Sweden.

The company had revenue of £4.1 billion in the year to 3rd July 2021, with £24 million profits.

With a fleet of around 4,000 buses, Kinetic is the largest bus operator in Australia and New Zealand.