

Dutch passenger transport group **Abellio** welcomed the decision of Transport Scotland today to award them the opportunity to run the next ScotRail franchise.

Jeff Hoogesteger, CEO of Abellio Group, said of the decision, "This is a huge day for Abellio and indeed the Netherlands which has such a rich history of commercial and cultural trade with Scotland. Abellio is delighted and incredibly excited to have been given this opportunity to manage Scotland's national rail network. For two years our team has been on a journey across Scotland and met people from the Borders, across the seven cities and to the very peak of the Far North Line so that we could prepare a plan that would meet and exceed the expectations of the Scottish Government.

"We look forward to delivering significant new benefits for passengers under the next franchise. Highlights will include new trains between Glasgow and Edinburgh, upgraded intercity services, better connectivity and journey times, innovative new fares, major station investments, a £1m community rail programme, and an employee gain share scheme."

Dominic Booth, Managing Director of Abellio UK added, "We would like to congratulate Transport Scotland on a transparent and extremely robust procurement process underpinned by a very clear vision of the role of the next franchise in driving long term socio-economic development. Abellio's record of collaborative, partnership working rests at the heart of our commitment to deliver that vision.

"With a population of 5.3 million and 86.3 million passenger journeys a year on ScotRail not once did we underestimate the challenge of delivering a high quality service to existing passengers while encouraging more people to use the network."

Our plans to transform the ScotRail franchise for passengers include:

#### **Brand new trains operating between Edinburgh and Glasgow as part of the EGIP project**

- Eighty new trains due to arrive at start of December 2017
- Free Wi-Fi capability throughout all carriages
- Enhanced catering service for passengers

#### **A true intercity offer Scotland can be proud of:**

Transformation of the quality of inter-city services by introducing a fully refurbished fleet of HSTs by December 2018 to connect the seven cities. The refurbishment will deliver:

- high quality on-board service, buffet and at seat catering
- a proper First Class offer for business travellers
- more toilets, luggage space and bike accommodation
- improved journey times and connectivity between the key cities

**A major investment programme for the flagship stations:**

- Aberdeen: major investment in concourse and retail development to improve links between the station and Union Street
- Inverness, Perth and Stirling: major investment in retail improvement schemes
- Introduction of our “Stations2Stations” business centres to facilitate working at stations

**Exciting new fares offering excellent value for money for passengers:**

- A standard class fare between any two Scottish cities starting at £5
- A new first class advance fare of £7.50 on the same routes
- A new carnet to allow customers to choose where they want to travel , how many tickets they want to buy and how long they need them to be valid
- Launch of Club50, a significantly improved version of Club55

**A flagship £1m national community rail programme to deliver the Scottish Government’s commitment to encourage and facilitate deeper community engagement:**

- Delivering 10-15 new Scottish Community Rail Partnerships
- Stimulating volunteering and enhancing the station adoption programme
- Community outreach programmes and Community Ambassadors to promote the value and benefits of rail travel

**Working with partners to attract international attention to the scenic beauty of Scotland’s railways with major upgrades to Scotland’s scenic trains to enhance the tourist experience:**

- Specially refurbished trains to align seats with windows
- More luggage, cycle and ski storage
- Additional service to Oban in peak season
- A Tourist Ambassador and improved on board catering that showcases local Scottish produce
- Special events in the low season to attract customers

**A new transport integration programme focused on key interchanges including those with ferries, buses and airports:**

- More through tickets that combine rail travel with bus, sail and air travel
- Expansion of multimodal products on Smartcards, including cycle hire and car parking
- Better multimodal information through staffed desks at 10 interchange stations, improved staff training, and our “Journey Companion” planning app
- More car parking and the introduction of “Cab and Go”
- A £520K station travel planning programme for 30 stations

**Based on our Dutch experience we will deliver the UK's most extensive cycle/rail network:**

- £1.6m investment in more cycle parking spaces:
- New, fully staffed Dutch style "Cyclepoints" at the key city hubs and "Cycleparks+" at five others
- Bike&Go cycle hire scheme at 10 stations, for only £3.80/day hire charge
- Improved off peak cycle capacity on trains

**Investments in staff health training, technology and incentive schemes**

- Customer service training and a gain share initiative to incentivise staff to achieve performance targets
- Optional lifestyle checks and flu jabs for frontline staff.
- Health and wellbeing trainers to assist staff with stress management, quitting smoking, better nutrition and exercise.
- Recruitment of 10 new apprentices every year targeted in areas of high unemployment

**New investment in accessibility and sustainability measures to help Scotland meet national targets:**

- More step free stations and prioritised investment of Access for All funds in other station schemes
- 400% increase in Blue Badge parking and specialist way-finding at stations
- Specialist staff training and a new "Passenger Assist" app to allow staff to track disabled passengers throughout their journey
- 37% reduction in traction CO2 and a 15% reduction in non-traction CO2 emissions
- An innovative Sustainable Development Enterprise Unit to promote economic growth and sustainable transport use across the network

Abellio will also put in place a true Deep Alliance with our partners Network Rail to drive improved performance for passengers and combined efficiencies through the life of the franchise

In closing Mr Hoogesteger added, "Abellio is a subsidiary of the Dutch national rail company Nederlandse Spoorwegen (NS). With a pedigree stretching back over 175 years, NS is one of the oldest and most experienced rail companies in the world. We now look forward to bringing every part of that experience to the management of Scotland's national railway to make it a world class exemplar for the future of passenger rail services."

**Contact:**

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For more information please visit [www.abellio.com/scotrail](http://www.abellio.com/scotrail)