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Abellio and Network Rail make early announcement about Alliance Managing Director for Scotland

In building on the recent announcement of the Day One leadership team for ScotRail, Network Rail and Abellio are delighted to announce the appointment of Phil Verster as managing director for the planned Abellio ScotRail/Network Rail Alliance in Scotland.

Prior to joining Network Rail in 2012, Phil was deputy chief executive officer at Irish Rail and before that engineering director at a London-based train operating company.

Phil will work closely with Abellio's mobilisation and transition team, the ScotRail leadership team and Network Rail to plan and organise the alliance transition arrangements, as well as facilitating an orderly and effective hand over from Steve Montgomery who has agreed to lead the new ScotRail franchise during the initial period of operations. Steve's leadership will ensure continuity in service quality for customers. We would like to take this opportunity to recognise Steve's tremendous contribution to ScotRail and wish him every success in the future.

The formation of a new alliance for Scotland's rail services offers major opportunities which require careful planning to deliver. The quick release of Phil Verster by Network Rail to work alongside Steve Montgomery and the Day One ScotRail team is a clear indication of the determination of both companies to set in place the formal alliance structure at the earliest opportunity.

Phil is currently route managing director of Network Rail's second largest route London North East (which includes the East Coast Main Line between London and Scotland) where he has led the implementation of continuous improvement, to drive cost benefits on the East Coast route. That, and his record in safety improvement, made him the ideal candidate for the role.

Announcing the appointment, Phil Hufton, managing director of network operations for Network Rail, said: "Phil brings a wealth of valuable experience to what will be one of the highest profile roles in the industry. He has achieved great results during his time on the East Coast mainline and I look forward to him bringing that same positive approach to leading the railway in Scotland."

Dominic Booth, managing director of Abellio UK, said: "We are delighted to be able to announce the appointment of Phil so early in the transition process, and so soon after announcing the Day One team for ScotRail. We are confident that Phil brings the requisite skills and experience to drive transformational change in order to deliver against our ambitious plans for the improvement of rail travel in Scotland."

Phil Verster, who will report into Dominic Booth and Phil Hufton and will take up his appointment shortly, added: "I am delighted to have been offered the opportunity to play this key role in Scotland's railway. The alliance between Abellio ScotRail and Network Rail gives us a unique opportunity to establish new ways of working and to improve what we deliver for the travelling public and our communities. This is a very exciting time for the railway in Scotland and my approach is all about listening to our communities and focusing on what is important to our customers."

Further senior level appointments will be announced in due course.