

Stagecoach invests £3.2m in fleet of Britain's biggest coaches

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Stagecoach has announced a £3.2m investment in a fleet of Britain's biggest coaches as it continues to meet growing demand for its market-leading inter-city travel service, megabus.com.

A fleet of eleven 15m-long coaches equipped with free Wi-Fi will be delivered in December and introduced on megabus.com routes covering Scotland and England.

Megabus.com now covers around 60 locations across the UK and carries around 5 million passengers a year.

Manufactured by Scottish-based Alexander Dennis Limited, the Plaxton Elite i coaches have 75 seats, offering more than 20% extra capacity than a standard 15m vehicle and more luggage space.

They provide roll-on level access for wheelchair users and other passengers with disabilities, eliminating the need for a special lift, and also feature tinted double-glazing and a toilet.

The vehicles will operate mainly on two routes: Glasgow - Edinburgh - Newcastle - Sheffield – London; and Preston - Manchester - London. They may also be used on some London - Leeds and London - Exeter - Plymouth services.

Included in the order is a coach in a special metallic version of the megabus.com livery to mark the 10th anniversary of the budget service in 2013.

Ian laing, General Manager for megabus.com, said: "Demand for great value inter-city travel just keeps on growing, especially with the rising cost of owning and running a car and the further stretch on household budgets. These new state-of-the-art coaches will deliver more capacity on key routes we operate in the UK.

"We have worked closely with Plaxton over the past 10 months on developing this new model. It sets new standards of accessibility for our customers with impaired mobility, as well as offering great comfort all round. The new fleet will also provide even greener travel for our customers and a lower carbon footprint for our business."

The Elite i higher-capacity coach will deliver lower per passenger emissions than standard coaches. Powered by a 10.8-litre Euro 5 engine, the vehicle is based on a tri-axle Volvo B11RT underframe.

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About Stagecoach Group:

Stagecoach Group is a leading international public transport group, with extensive operations in the UK, United States and Canada. The company employs around 35,000 people, and operates bus, coach, rail, and tram services. Around 3 million customers use the Group's transport services every day.

Stagecoach is one of UK's biggest bus and coach operators. Around 2.5 million passengers buy bus tickets (<http://uk.megabus.com/>), for Stagecoach's 7,700 buses every day on a network stretching from south-west England to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The company's business includes major city bus operations in London, Liverpool, Newcastle, Hull, Manchester, Oxford, Sheffield and Cambridge. It also operates the market-leading budget coach service megabus.com, which links around 60 key cities, including a bus to Ireland (<http://uk.megabus.com/wintersale.aspx>), and carries 5 million passengers a year in the UK. Offers for free bus travel (<http://uk.megabus.com/England%20to%20Ireland.aspx>) can be found on megabus.com.

Stagecoach is a major UK rail operator, running the South West Trains, Island Line and East Midlands Trains networks. It has a 49% shareholding in Virgin Rail Group, which operates the West Coast inter-city rail franchise.

Stagecoach also operates the Supertram network in Sheffield.

In North America, Stagecoach operates around 2,700 buses and national coaches in the United States and Canada. Budget coach service megabus.com links more than 90 key locations in North America. Stagecoach is also involved in operating commuter and transit services, as well as tours, charters, sightseeing tours and a small number of school bus services.

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