

# TRANSPORT

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## Stagecoach completes Wirral bus acquisition

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Stagecoach has concluded its acquisition of First Group's bus operations in Cheshire and The Wirral, a deal which has added three depots, 290 staff and 110 vehicles to its existing Merseyside and South Lancashire business.

The group has paid £4.5m to acquire the operation and, like the recent purchase of First's operation in Wigan, Stagecoach has brought in a large number of new and mid-life buses to replace many of the vehicles inherited with the purchase.

Stagecoach has previously said that it believes there is significant scope to expand and develop the business and that it will extend its existing operations in the north west of England.

Meanwhile, the Office of Fair Trading has announced that it is to investigate the purchase of First's Wigan bus operations by the Perth-based group. Stagecoach has already made a number of undertakings to the OFT with regard to the operations of the business and assets while the investigation takes place.

The OFT also recently reviewed Stagecoach's planned acquisition of Middleton-based independent operator Bluebird Bus & Coach. Completion of this deal is subject to the OFT's final verdict and a decision is expected soon.

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### PASSENGER TRANSPORT

[This article was first published in \*Passenger Transport\*, the leading fortnightly magazine for the UK transport sector.](#)

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