

PRESS RELEASE

Porterbrook and Northern to introduce bi-mode Class 319 Flex trains

Working with the Rail North Partnership, to support a growing railway in the north, Porterbrook and train operator Northern, part of the Arriva Group, are jointly developing a highly innovative rolling stock concept.

Porterbrook Leasing is pleased to announce that it has committed to deliver to Northern, a variant of a Class 319 electric train which is able to operate seamlessly over electrified and non-electrified routes, spreading the benefits of electrification to more rail users. The project is supported by Rail North, representing local authorities in the north of England.

The Class 319 Flex concept is designed to create a bi-mode train by fitting two diesel powered alternators, one under each of the driving trailer cars. The diesel alternators provide power to the existing traction and auxiliary equipment to allow the EMU to operate without an overhead or 3rd rail supply. The systems will provide power through the train's DC bus, avoiding any significant changes to the existing equipment and creating a unit capable of operating from a number of different power sources whilst maintaining its full capabilities on electrified routes.

From inception, the concept for the Class 319 Flex was developed to minimise alterations to the existing vehicle design, and hence kept the cost of conversion to an attractive level. The design also has provision to cater for a range of operations, either as an alternative to existing DMUs or offering more performance if required through the fitment of additional batteries for non-electrified operations.

Zena Dent, Projects & Technical Director for Porterbrook said "The highly innovative Class 319 Flex will be a flexible and highly efficient unit that will provide operators with a 'go anywhere' train, something which is not currently available with any other rolling stock solution."

David Hoggarth, Rail North Director, said "We are very pleased to work together with rail industry partners to support the development of this innovative rolling stock solution that will contribute to the transformation of rail services currently underway in the north of England, helping to support economic growth."

Concept design work is now complete and work has started with Wabtec/Brush on the detailed design phase of the project.

The first units will be in passenger service with train operator Arriva Northern by spring 2018 and from then on will be available to a wide range of operators who will be able to make full use of electrically powered rolling stock on partially electrified routes.