

WEST SUSSEX RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER No 2: MAY 2014

A reminder that our Annual General Meeting is at 10.15am on Saturday 31st May in the Studio of the Capitol Theatre, North Road, Horsham, RH12 1RG.

We had hoped to be able to give you news at the AGM of the new franchise and we are pleased to say that the Department for Transport (DfT) has announced today that the contract has been awarded to Govia who currently operate Southern. Here are extracts from the Go-Ahead statement issued this morning. I have omitted the Financial Profile details to keep this Newsletter reasonably brief but these can be found on the DfT and Go-Ahead websites.

Trevor Tupper
Membership Secretary
23 May 2014

“GO-AHEAD JOINT VENTURE AWARDED THE THAMESLINK, SOUTHERN AND GREAT NORTHERN (TSGN) FRANCHISE

The Go-Ahead Group welcomes today’s announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) to award Govia (Go-Ahead 65% / Keolis 35% joint venture) the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise. This is the largest rail franchise in the UK in terms of passenger numbers, trains, revenue, and staff.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **New trains** – introducing three new train fleets
- **More services** – 10,000 additional morning peak seats into London
- **Increasing capacity** – 50% more passenger capacity created
- **Better connections** – up to 24 trains per hour through the Thameslink core in peak periods
- **Station enhancement** – £50m investment in improving facilities

Commenting on the award, David Brown, Group Chief Executive of The Go-Ahead Group said:

“I’m delighted the DfT has chosen us to operate this important and complex franchise and to play an instrumental role in delivering the benefits of the Government’s £6 billion Thameslink Programme. This will be the UK’s busiest franchise and we will be introducing 50 per cent more capacity into central London during peak times, with 26 per cent more morning peak carriages providing 10,000 additional seats. This award is testimony to the experience of our people of working in partnership with the DfT, Network Rail and other industry stakeholders and in delivering major integration projects and change programmes. Our bid for the franchise was focused on improving customers’ experience and includes two new train fleets for Gatwick Express and Moorgate services, in addition to overseeing the introduction of the Thameslink trains already ordered, as well as delivering improvements at stations.

Alistair Gordon, Chief Executive of Keolis UK, added:

“We are pleased that the strengths of the Govia partnership have been recognised today in the awarding of this important franchise and look forward to delivering its challenging requirements.”

FRANCHISE HIGHLIGHTS

The seven year management contract, starting in September 2014, which replaces the Thameslink and Great Northern franchise (operated as First Capital Connect, FCC) will encompass the Southern and Gatwick Express routes from July 2015 and also include a small number of services and stations currently operated by Southeastern which will transfer in December 2014.

Combined, the existing FCC and Southern franchises carry 273 million passenger journeys per year, employ around 6,500 people and generate annual passenger revenues of £1.3bn.

The TSGN network will serve London as well as a number of important regional centres, including Cambridge, Luton and Peterborough to the north of the region, and Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton in the south. It also provides direct rail links to major airports (Gatwick and Luton) as well as St Pancras International and Farringdon station for links to Heathrow and Crossrail in due course.

During the course of the franchise the Thameslink identity will be re-introduced and the Southern and Gatwick Express brands retained.

The new franchise is being let as a management contract where ticket revenues are passed directly to the Government rather than retained by Govia, due to the complexity and scale of the planned changes to services and infrastructure. We are committed to delivering these changes and minimising their impacts on customers.

Benefits for customers during the franchise

New trains -108 new Gatwick Express carriages designed for airline travellers by 2016; 150 new metro carriages for Moorgate services in 2018; 1,140 Thameslink Class 700 carriages already ordered from Siemens delivered between 2016 and 2018

More services - 10,000 additional morning peak seats into London; 26% more morning peak carriages into London; 50% more passenger capacity created; Up to 24 trains per hour during the peak periods through the Thameslink core (St Pancras to Blackfriars), up from 15 per hour today, an increase of 60%; More direct services to and from Gatwick Airport including a new direct Cambridge to Brighton service; Improved Brighton Main Line services

Stations and staffing -£50m investment to enhance all 239 stations including improving access, installing electronic information screens and working with partners on the redevelopment of St Albans and Luton stations; Staffing hours increased: 100 busiest stations staffed from first to last train; Simplified ticketing and extension of 'the key' smartcard; 104 stations with free wifi; £1.5m on station access improvements including increased cycle storage and electrical vehicle charging points

Improving standards - Timetables designed to improve punctuality; 20,000 days of customer service training for frontline employees; Investment in technology such as smartphone apps and websites to improve real-time information to make door-to-door travel easier; On-hand assistance for passengers during the Thameslink Programme works

Local community focus - Continuing support of Community Rail Partnerships; Providing young people with work experience and mentoring; Award winning education programme Go-Learn used with local schools; £1m per year for local communities to spend on improvements at stations"