

## **BRAG WELCOMES FRANCHISE ANNOUNCEMENT**

Bexhill Rail Action Group has welcomed the announcement by the Department for Transport today (23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014) that Govia has been selected to run local rail services for a further seven years.

Govia runs the current Southern franchise on the East Coastway and Marshlink routes through Bexhill, and under the new Thameslink Southern Great Northern franchise will also progressively assume control of suburban services north of the Thames. The existing Southern branding will remain.

Hugh Sharp, BRAG Chairman said

"This announcement means that our local rail services will continue to be run by a team which is familiar with the problems of running services on over-crowded lines into London. In recent years BRAG has developed a strong relationship with Southern Rail. This has ensured that local concerns are promptly investigated - though inevitably we can't always achieve instant changes. So we welcome the Government's decision.

"BRAG will continue pressing for improved services and better facilities. For example we have already raised the case for installing ticket gates at Bexhill Station to prevent unauthorised use of our already crowded trains. "

He concluded

"We are awaiting details as to what improvements will be made to our local rail services in their winning bid. BRAG and the other rail user groups in East Sussex made detailed submissions to the DfT as part of this process. Our list included improved journey times on the route to London through an end to attachment and division of trains at Haywards Heath, as well as more seats on local services between Brighton and Ashford."

For further details about the franchise announcement see

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-rail-franchising-deal-set-to-transform-passenger-services-across-london-and-south-east>

**ENDS**

## Press Release

### THE GO-AHEAD GROUP PLC "GO-AHEAD" OR "THE GROUP"

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 £8 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.

"I'm looking forward to working with existing colleagues and welcoming new staff and together delivering this transformational franchise."

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.