

Go-Ahead Group plc : Go-Ahead Group welcomes plans for rail franchising

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Press Release

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Go-Ahead Group welcomes

Government's long-term plans for rail franchising

UK transport operator Go-Ahead has today welcomed the announcement by the Department for Transport (DfT) on the long-term plans for rail franchising.

Group Chief Executive David Brown said: "The programme announced today will help restore confidence in the franchising process and enable operators to continue to build on the success of UK rail to date. It is also positive news that the Government intends to restart the Thameslink franchise bid process in September this year to ensure the timely delivery of the Thameslink programme.

"We welcome the opportunity to agree extended contract terms for London Midland and Southeastern, which will enable the DfT to meet its objectives and assist the delivery of further improvements for passengers and taxpayers.

"Go-Ahead will also continue to focus on delivering its £100m bus profit target announced last October."

Ends

Notes to editors:

Southeastern has been offered a 50 month franchise extension beyond its current expiry date of April 2014, which would take the franchise to June 2018.

A 21 month extension to June 2017 has been offered to London Midland, which has a current franchise expiry date of September 2015.

As planned, the Southern franchise will cease in July 2015, at which point it will merge with the existing Thameslink franchise to form part of the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise.

The Go-Ahead Group

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GO-AHEAD

Go-Ahead is a leading UK public transport operator, providing high quality services in the bus and rail sectors. Employing around 22,000 people across the country, over one billion passenger journeys are undertaken on our services each year. We are committed to operating our companies in a safe, socially and environmentally responsible way and are proud to have been recredited with Carbon Trust Standard after taking action on climate change. In addition to the travelling public, our customers include the Department for Transport, Transport for London (TfL) and local authorities.

BUS

Go-Ahead is one of the UK's largest bus operators. With a fleet of around 3,900 buses, we carry, on average, around 1.7 million passengers every day. Our operations are focused on high density commuter markets. We have a strong presence in London, with around 21per cent market share, where we provide regulated services for TfL. We operate deregulated services in Oxford, East Anglia, the South East, Southern and North East England. We also have a yellow school bus joint venture in North America.

RAIL

The rail operation, Govia, is 65per cent owned by Go-Ahead and 35per cent by Keolis. It is the busiest rail operation in the UK, responsible for nearly 30per cent of all UK passenger rail journeys through its three rail franchises: Southern (which includes the Gatwick Express), Southeastern and London Midland. In December 2009, Southeastern began operating the UK's first high speed domestic rail service between Kent and London, significantly reducing journey times

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