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BREAKING NEWS: Franchise extension granted for First Capital Connect

Written by KEELEY KNOWLES

THE Department for Transport (DfT) has announced that First Capital Connect's franchise will be extended by 12 months to September 2014.

After this date a new franchise will be let which, in July 2015, will then incorporate rail services currently operated by Southern. First Capital Connect's parent company FirstGroup was one of the companies shortlisted to bid for this franchise in March 2012.



First Capital Connect

Commenting on the franchise extension, First Capital Connect Managing Director Neal Lawson said: "Despite the challenges of operating an ageing fleet of trains, passenger satisfaction has improved during our time in charge of the franchise, some elements by up to 17 per cent, despite carrying 14 million more people a year.

"We have brought in extra trains and longer services to deliver 29 per cent more seats at the busiest times of the day on the Thameslink route and 22 per cent extra on the Great Northern.

"We have also shown we can manage complex projects such as the Thameslink Programme which will deliver more much-needed new capacity and route improvements and we will continue working closely on this with the DfT and our industry partners."

Tim O'Toole, FirstGroup chief executive added: "The publication of the timetable setting out the return to rail franchising is an important development for the industry, enabling the private sector to continue to provide effective and efficient passenger rail services with further performance and infrastructure improvements. In particular, the extension of our First Capital Connect franchise provides continuity and consistency for our passengers and enables us to continue to deliver considerable improvements to services.

"As the UK's largest and most experienced rail operator, we remain committed to maintaining a leading position in the market. We look forward to reviewing the details of the upcoming franchise competitions as they are announced, and submitting further high quality bids that deliver for passengers, taxpayers and shareholders."

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AN employee has been stuck in the lift at a Bedford department store for more than an hour as fire crews

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MORE than 80 burglars have been arrested in the last six weeks as part of Operation Sabre, the force wide initiative to fight crime and protect the public.

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BEDFORDSHIRE Police are appealing for witnesses to come forward following complaints about a man who has been exposing himself to girls near a

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Published: Thu 04 Apr 2013

TRAFFIC was brought to a standstill last night after two lorries jack-knifed on the M1 during rush hour.

Frescoes joins up to 'Suspended Coffee' scheme to help homeless

Published: Thu 04 Apr 2013

A COFFEE chain has jumped on the bandwagon of an international trend which sees customers paying for a second cup for a homeless person.

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PLANS are underway to reopen a former gypsy and traveller site in Bedford as an alternative to Meadow Lane after 'technical issues' arose causing delays with

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CHILDREN and adults have been wowed by the very first showing of John Lawson's Award Winning Human Circus at Frosts Garden Centre!

FILM REVIEW: GI Joe: Retaliation

Published: Wed 03 Apr 2013



It may have been scandalously positioned in the market for maximum effect, but there's been worse ways to spend a of couple hours at your local multiplex.

Tails of bad luck for the historic black cat of Chawston

Published: Sun 31 Mar 2013



IT only took ten minutes to dig the holes and set the cement, then their mission was complete. The black cat was up and on its first life.

Music will have you wrapped right round the Little Fingers

Published: Sun 31 Mar 2013



DON'T be fooled by their name, as there's nothing little about this band.

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