

First Great Western keeps its franchise

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THE Department for Transport has said it is close to completing negotiations with [First Great Western](#) to run the Great Western mainline for another three years.

The franchise competition was halted late last year after protests from Virgin, which faced losing the right to run West Coast trains from London to the West Midlands, the North West and Scotland.

Serious flaws were discovered in the way the DfT had assessed the competing bids.

Government officials have now decided that the franchise competition will begin again in March 2015, with the successful operator running trains from London Paddington through Oxfordshire from July 2016.

The DfT has said it is still negotiating with First Great Western over running the franchise on an interim basis until then and expects these talks to conclude soon.

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