

**25th May 2000**

## **The SSRA underlines its approach to franchise replacement**

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Building a Better Railway;

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Improvements in performance, with increased compensation where this is not achieved, and new investment, are central elements within the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority's approach to franchise replacement.

Publishing an updated guide to franchise replacement at the Rail Summit today, Mike Grant, Chief Executive of the SSRA, said:

"Performance in the rail industry has scope for further improvement and increased investment is required to bring that about. Franchise replacement is intended to bring about that increased investment, and consequently we have long-term aspirations for improved performance. Where performance falls below acceptable levels passengers should receive a decent level of compensation".

In its new guide to franchise replacement issued today, the SSRA underlines key elements in its approach

- **Significant improvements to the 'Passengers Charter'** will be expected from new franchisees. These may include offering passengers cash rather than vouchers in compensation if they prefer and compensating season ticket holders for individual delays of over 30 minutes.

- **New aspirational targets have been set for the performance levels** we expect to see achieved when the necessary investment package has been delivered either as service or infrastructure improvements. Over time, we would expect operators to move to a new target that 15 out of 16 trains should reach their destination within five minutes of scheduled time (within ten minutes in the case of long distance, high speed operators).

- **A commitment to continuous improvement in performance** from rail franchises. New standards will be set, related to the type of service offered in each franchise.

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. The guide to franchise replacement issued today is a revised and updated version of the original issued on 27 January 2000.
2. The SSRA is currently engaged in the process of franchise replacement. It is in negotiations with parties over the Chiltern, Connex South Central and Great North Eastern Railway franchises. We expect to make an announcement on one of these over the next few weeks.
3. Preferred bidders have been asked to prepare proposals for the Central Trains, South West Trains and Transpennine Express franchises. A feasibility study has been set up by the SSRA into the possibility of a 'WalesRail' franchise.