

25th July 2000

Update on Progress with East Coast Main Line Franchise

The Chief Executive of the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority, Mike Grant, has announced today that a decision on the preferred bidder for the East Coast Main Line will be finalised in Autumn 2000.

Mr Grant said:

"The East Coast route from London to Yorkshire, North East England and Scotland is of major strategic importance and any decision on its long term future requires careful consideration. I consider that the level of the proposals we have received so far require more development and improvement before I will be in a position to make my final decision. More work has to be done."

Note to Editors

The two companies competing for the InterCity East Coast franchise are Sea Containers (the owners of the current operator, GNER) and Virgin/Stagecoach.