

1st April 2003

Three Qualify For New Greater Anglia Franchise

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) announced today that three parties have qualified as bidders for the new Greater Anglia franchise, under the terms of the new franchise policy published last Autumn.

The parties are: **Arriva Trains Ltd; GB Railways Plc; National Express Group PLC**

The SRA's new franchising policy marks a radical departure for passengers and operators. It provides train companies with clear guidelines and incentives on customer service and on business priorities.

The new franchise will incorporate existing Anglia Railways, Great Eastern and West Anglia rail services after the end of current franchises in 2004, in line with the SRA's policy of one operator for major London termini.

The franchise will be of up to ten years' duration, depending on final bids.

In the next stage of the franchising process, the SRA will invite the three parties to submit detailed bids.

The SRA expects to announce a preferred bidder in Spring 2004.

Richard Bowker, SRA Chairman, said:

"The essence of the new franchise policy is to give greater clarity and certainty to bidders about what we expect on behalf of passengers. The qualification threshold was set at a very demanding level indeed to ensure the best possible competition on behalf of passengers and taxpayers. This franchising revolution is a very real step towards the industry presenting itself as fit for purpose to passengers and investors." Notes to Editors

1. The Greater Anglia franchise will combine the existing Anglia and Great Eastern franchises, and the West Anglia (Liverpool Street) services from the WAGN franchise (including Stansted Express). The new franchise will achieve passenger service and operational benefits through combining all Liverpool Street services, but the successful operator will also be required to provide a separate management focus for local East Anglia services.
2. All three current franchises (Anglia Railways, Great Eastern and West Anglia) are due to expire on 31 March 2004.
3. Separate arrangements will be made in relation to Great Northern services which are currently part of the WAGN franchise. Options for the future of Great Northern services are currently being considered.

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