

10th December 2003

Island Line Franchise Signed

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) announced today that it has signed a new three-year franchise agreement with Stagecoach Group plc to operate the Island Line on the Isle of Wight.

The agreement runs from December 2003 to February 2007, and secures the continuing operation of the existing level of rail services on the Island. The principles of the deal were agreed and announced in November 2002.

Notes to Editors

The Island Line runs from Shanklin to Ryde Pier Head, linking in with ferry and hovercraft services to the island from Portsmouth. It is Britain's smallest rail franchise, operating to eight stations on 8.5 miles of track.

Subsidy over the period of the franchise totals £10.6m in 2003-04 prices. A year-by-year breakdown is available from the SRA Press Office on request.

The new franchise expires on 4 February 2007, making it co-terminus with the South West Trains franchise, also held by Stagecoach Group.

**For further details contact the Department for Transport Rail Press desk:
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