

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Crewe Hub Consultation
 Department for Transport
 3/14 Great Minster House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London
 SW1P 4DR

10th October 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

Crewe Hub Consultation

TravelWatch NorthWest is an independent Community Interest Company representing public transport users in North West England. We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

Question 1 Do you support the vision for a hub station at Crewe as suggested by Sir David Higgins, as set out at paragraphs 3.3 - 3.7?

We do support this concept. If there is no direct interchange at Crewe to the standard railway system, and trains serving these destinations, passengers from Scotland, Carlisle and Preston will see no improvement and have to continue to use the current West Coast trains which, in view of line capacity, may even end up being less frequent. Crewe has been and still is an important hub for services to many parts, i.e. further North, Merseyside, Manchester, North Wales, the Welsh border area and the Potteries. It is essential to continue these links with HS2.

Question 2 Do you support the concept of splitting and joining HS2 trains at Crewe, which could provide more seats from Crewe - London and also allow a HS2 service to Stoke-on-Trent as set out at paragraph 5.8 - 5.14?

Crewe is a major interchange for long distance travel to/from the North (Warrington - Glasgow) for passengers not travelling to/from London. We therefore favour train splitting to give extra services to destinations not needing full length trains. It also locks in Liverpool and Scotland from the outset. Presently the hourly service serving Crewe is inadequate and a number of Virgin station staff have commented over the years that more calls are required. Stoke-on-Trent is a large city which does need a direct HS2 service.

Question 3 *Which additional destinations north of Crewe might be served through splitting and joining trains at Crewe, as set out at paragraph 5.15 - 5.18?*

We would add to this Blackpool and stations north of Preston – Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith and Carlisle. The Lake District has now acquired World Heritage status which is likely to increase its already burgeoning tourism potential.

Question 4 a. *Do you support the concept of stopping more HS2 services at Crewe, as set out in chapter 5?*

There needs to be a good level of HS2 services stopping at Crewe, not just for the purposes of splitting, but to serve the growing service industries in South Cheshire. .

b. Please indicate your views on the potential service pattern(s) outlined in this document.

In question 3 we referred to HS2 serving stations north of Preston. We note that figure 5 shows an hourly HS2 service between London and Glasgow (no services to Edinburgh) and figure 10 shows through HS2 services between Birmingham Curzon Street and Glasgow/ Edinburgh. Given our comments on the importance of the Lake District we would strongly not accept that HS2 London services should omit calls at Lancaster, Oxenholme and Penrith. However we have gleaned that such services will not call at these stations, with trains that do call there terminating at Curzon Street. This is not acceptable given that we understand that Oxenholme in itself produces more traffic with London than Carlisle and Penrith combined, according to data from Virgin Trains. It is absolutely vital that the area retains the best possible links with the capital.

Question 5 *Do you support the principle of a junction north of Crewe station which could allow HS2 services from Crewe to Manchester, Birmingham and Scotland, as set out at paragraph 5.19 - 5.28?*

The junction north of Crewe is vital for the economic case of the line as well as providing much needed extra capacity beyond HS2.

Question 6 *What are your views on the level of freight growth that should be considered in planning a Crewe Hub?*

We have no view on this other than ensuring there is capacity for freight growth that does not impinge on passenger services.

Question 7 *What are your views on future local and regional passenger services that should be considered in planning a Crewe Hub?*

Local and regional services need to be sufficient to provide seamless connections from HS2 services to the many areas served from Crewe, some of which have very poor levels of service at present. Prime examples are Merseyside, Manchester Airport and North Wales.

Question 8 *What do you see as the potential for a local funding contribution to any of these interventions alongside complementary works, such as improving the existing station buildings and road access?*

There has been a long standing proposal to improve the access and other facilities at Crewe station. This was led by the then Crewe and Nantwich Council, subsequently Cheshire East and would involve a partnership with the rail industry. This has not been progressed due to problems within the rail industry agreeing on the scale of the works needed. These plans need to be taken forward in their entirety to give suitable facilities for passengers using a modern railway.

Following this work, more needs to be done to upgrade the facilities on the platforms which are currently below the standards expected by today's passengers.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours faithfully

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary