

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)

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East Midlands Consultation Co-ordinator
 Department for Transport
 2/21 Great Minster House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London SW1P 4DR

6th October 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

East Midlands Rail Franchise Public 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 and confine our comments to the Liverpool-Norwich and Crewe – Derby services which involve our region.

Liverpool - Norwich

We would not resist handover of this route to TransPennine Express given trains with 100mph capability, more capacity and the inclusion of First Class. We do have some reservations about splitting the service at Nottingham. The present Liverpool-Norwich services enables links from the North West to Stansted Airport, Harwich (for Hoek van Holland), Cambridge, Ely and other towns.

Although figures recently provided to us by First TPE show only 4% of passengers going through Nottingham we were involved in a previous survey some years ago which showed a considerably higher figure than this. Since then the practice of split ticketing has increased and it is likely that the growth in this phenomenon would account for more through journeys than ticket sales might show. We recommend that further independent on board passenger surveys are carried out before decisions on splitting the service are made.

We give some further options for consideration -

- To have two services covering the whole of the route and overlapping between Sheffield and Peterborough. This would give a Liverpool to Peterborough service and a Sheffield to Norwich service. The Liverpool to Peterborough service could provide good connections to Ely and Norwich plus Cambridge or Stansted Airport.

- The provision of a third Hope Valley Express service to serve the East Midlands, especially Leicester. This idea originated from the “Project Rio” services from Manchester to St Pancras during the WCML upgrade in the early part of the century. The trains were well used for North West to East Midlands journeys. Ideally, as a through service to St Pancras, there would be ideal connections to HS1 as well as Leicester and Luton Airport.
- There are some calls for consideration to be given to a direct service from Liverpool and Manchester to the East Midlands cities which avoid the significant time penalty of going in and out of Sheffield. This would speed up direct intercity links between these two regions.
- There is a definite logic in the Liverpool - Norwich service being transferred to TPE, but it should be kept on the CLC route - to maintain the provision of a high quality inter-regional service on the route.

Crewe – Derby

This service receives scant mention other than the phrase - “Regional services are also overcrowded, particularly between Crewe and Derby” in the introduction to section 4.

This service is clearly not fulfilling its potential. The current hourly service is a single class 153 unit with one 2 car train operating eastbound in the morning peak, returning in the evening. We contend that a two trains per hour service is needed, with consideration being given to an extension to Manchester Airport in the west and Nottingham in the east. Many passengers at Manchester Airport come from the East Midlands and Potteries, but have no direct rail route and are obliged to travel by road. There may also be scope for the second train in the hour operating from Liverpool, via Crewe and Derby to Leicester. Many businesses in Merseyside have connections with the East Midlands.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours faithfully

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary