

17th July 2009

**Network RUS: Electrification Strategy – submission by
Travelwatch NorthWest**

General

1. TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing users of all forms of public transport in North West England. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the strategy and apologise for the delay in forwarding these comments.

2. TWNW is generally supportive of the strategy. We have long felt that further electrification of Britain's railways is needed. We welcome the recognition that electrification is important on environmental grounds in reducing carbon emissions and enabling alternative sources of power to be utilised.

3. We recognise that electrification brings significant benefits to passengers –

- Faster acceleration and quicker journey times especially for services with frequent stops. Many local services in the North West would benefit from this.
- Better reliability
- Cleaner than Diesel power
- Quieter, smoother ride
- The electrification of Diversionary routes enables services to operate more conveniently for passengers at times of disruption. This helps to minimise the use of replacement buses which are not liked by passengers
- The creation of new through journey opportunities where otherwise the need for loco change has prevented this e.g. London to Blackpool .

4. Any work on involving track and associated infrastructure of necessity brings about disrupted journeys for passengers. It is of vital importance that such disruption is minimised when the work is carried out.

North West

5. We are pleased to see that electrification of routes between Manchester-Euxton Jct, Preston to Blackpool North and Oxenholme to Windermere all potentially offer high value for money. We would add to this Carnforth to Barrow and Lancaster to Morecambe. First Trans Pennine operate through services from Manchester Airport and Manchester to Barrow as frequently as to Windermere. Indeed Barrow could be said to take priority over Windermere in population terms and significantly Barrow is an economically deprived area that would benefit from the “sparks” effect.

6. Morecambe is at the end of a short branch from Lancaster (Morecambe South Jct) which would not provide significant physical problems to electrification. Through services could operate easily with electric traction to and from Preston and beyond.

7. In terms of the Liverpool to Wigan/Preston options priority should be given to Huyton to Wigan North Western in conjunction with Edge Hill to Manchester and Preston to Blackpool. This would enable through services Liverpool to Preston and beyond (Blackpool, Morecambe, Scotland).

Conclusion

8. The need for economic appraisal is recognised, but we emphasise that all passenger benefits are captured, including for instance when appraising electrification of a diversionary route.