

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

Princess St Manchester: Tel 07807 768124
 Email: admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
 Website: www.travelwatch-northwest.org.uk
 Correspondence address – 11 Harvelin
 Park, Todmorden, OL14 6HX

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High Speed Rail 2 Phase Two Route Consultation
 PO Box 115
 Harrow
 HA1 9LH

31st January 2014

Dear HS2,

HS2 Phase Two Route Consultation

Introduction

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company, representing the interests of public transport users in North West England.

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) broadly welcomes the plans recently announced to extend the High Speed Rail network to the North West.

We see the main argument for HS2 as primarily being an increase in capacity to meet growth beyond the capacity of the existing system, but it will also bring economic benefits to the north. However, it is vitally important that concentration on the HS2 project does not deprive the existing route network of investment or continuing development. A holistic view of HS2 as part of the wider rail system needs to be taken.

It is also vitally important that -

- Good interchange is provided between High Speed Trains and **modern** local trains to enable passengers to start and finish their rail journeys as conveniently and comfortably as possible.
- Service levels on the existing West Coast Main Line are kept at a good frequency between centres of population not served by HSR in order to maintain connectivity. Specifically research shows that passengers prefer **not** to change trains as far as possible.

- Fares are priced reasonably.

Crewe and Liverpool

We support the case made by Cheshire East Council for a new HS2 hub station at Crewe, fully integrated with other rail services. This would enable some London – Manchester/ London – Glasgow high speed trains to call there.

We also support Merseytravel and Liverpool's call for a full HS2 link into Merseyside to bring maximum benefit to access to the Merseyside area and free up space on existing lines, benefiting other services. The case for freeing up space is underlined by the fact that doubling the Liverpool - London (HS) service will put more pressure on the existing Crewe – Liverpool line and disallow any other passenger service improvements for both local and long distance services on this route, e.g. Liverpool to the West Midlands, the West of England and South Coast.

Manchester

There is an argument for Manchester to be on a through route to Scotland rather than being at the end of the line. However this would entail higher costs when continuing the route beyond Manchester than with the existing proposals. We agree that the Piccadilly location is the best option in the circumstances and it is essential that the station is designed to make excellent interchange with the many onward transport options available.

Manchester Airport

The proposed location of the High Speed Station will be some distance from the Airport Terminals. We can appreciate the reasoning behind this location but stress that the best possible measures must be taken to ensure that passenger interchange arrangements are as convenient as possible.

Freeing up capacity on classic routes

There is surely no question that the Integrated Connectivity approach should be taken – the holistic approach. HS2 must be an integral part of the rail network. With regard to specific capacity issues Liverpool to Crewe has been mentioned above. Also the lack of free capacity on the WCML north of Golborne will be significantly more marked by the time Phase 2 becomes operational. There must therefore be significant capacity enhancements carried out to this crucial section of the route (Golborne – Glasgow/ Edinburgh) in parallel with HS2 development. Passenger growth will require this anyway and HS2 will add to that growth. To give one example there are aspirations to introduce services between Liverpool and Scotland as well as ongoing enhancements between Manchester and Scotland. North West

electrification will give a further impetus to growth on this corridor. Potential increases in freight should also be taken into account.

Timescales

We and others remain very concerned about the length of time it will take to build HS2. Every effort should be made to speed up the whole process, more quickly than the existing timescales, especially given that we have capacity issues **now** at certain times of the year/ day on many routes and this will become increasingly exacerbated. The strategy for continuation of the HS route to Scotland should also be published as soon as possible.

We trust that as the project proceeds and service patterns on both HS and classic lines develop we will have the opportunity to put our views on behalf of North West England passengers.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Yours faithfully,

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary