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## **Liverpool Lime St closure 30/9/17 to 23/10/17 replacement services - a summary of some experiences**

### ***Introduction***

A small number of replacement services were sampled. This is a summary.

### ***Prior Information***

Posters started to appear well in advance of the works and were displayed in stations with any service to Liverpool, such as Birmingham New Street, for example. Also, a short time before the blockade started the free Metro paper had a four page “wrap” giving details of what was happening.

A large number of good quality detailed timetable books were published by Northern and Merseyrail and were readily available at stations visited on and off the routes surveyed. Some confusion about Northern’s timetable No 10 – ‘Liverpool to Wigan and Blackpool North’ for the period 2 October to 10 November. There was just a **very small note** on its front cover stating “this timetable is only valid between 23 October and 10 November 2017. Alternative timetables will be published”. Our reporter was misled by this.

London Midland and Virgin issued small leaflets with basic details of the works, but with no timetable information. Virgin produced posters with timetable details which were displayed at relevant stations. East Midlands Trains and TPE, though, issued no printed information. On the BBC red button service, all operators except TPE had basic information regarding the works

### ***Liverpool Lime St - information and arrangements***

Information here could have been somewhat better. On 11<sup>th</sup> October our reporter found that at the exit from platform to concourse there was no apparent information about buses. The main departure board indicated a bus to Hunts Cross via Liverpool South Parkway, but showed no departure point. At the station exit door a large poster indicated the direction of the Rail Replacement bus. A small poster was displayed on a post at the top of the steps but this had been damaged and only half was displayed. This had an arrow that pointed across the road. At the city side of the road another lamppost poster had an arrow pointing right where a double-decker Arriva bus was parked with destination displays exhibiting “Rail Replacement” and “Hunts Cross/Liverpool South Parkway.” There was no dedicated bus stop or

staff other than the driver who was helpful. No ticket check took place. Passengers unfamiliar with the area may well have been confused and the information would have been better with more repeater direction signs.

On 18th October however the reporter found posters in place directing passengers to the rail replacement buses which were shown as leaving from St Georges Plateau in front of the station. The bus stop was obvious from the bottom of the station steps with a large sign visible and staff in attendance.

On 19<sup>th</sup> October our reporter found plenty of notices from Network Rail regarding rebuilding the station for the first time since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but didn't see any obvious posters about how trains were starting instead at South Parkway, and how to get there. The information desk was open.

### ***Liverpool South Parkway***

On 11<sup>th</sup> October our reporter found the signing in the station concourse to be quite good but repeater posters on the roof stanchions were sited well above eye level and could be easily missed. The electronic bus departure information board did not include any rail replacement service information and departure times were not evident. The unfamiliar passenger could be confused but there was an army of identifiable staff who were being fairly proactive in seeking out "lost" passengers.

On 18<sup>th</sup> October, no staff were on the platform and no extra signage for the service to the city centre, except the usual "Northern Line" signs. On the overbridge, staff were visible and guiding passengers in the direction of the barriers where tickets were checked. Passengers were pointed in the direction of the bridge access to platform 5 where the Merseyrail trains were being turned. A queuing system was in place where Liverpool bound passengers were held on the bridge until the train from Liverpool had emptied and then allowed onto the platform.

On 19<sup>th</sup> October our reporter noted plenty of staff on the overbridge looking out for lost-looking passengers and directing them. He also saw extra signage provided to help passengers find their way and separate in/out lanes barrier taped to aid passenger flow. Passengers arriving on the concourse from platforms 1-4 were diverted from the automatic barriers thus facilitating fast transfers. The only hold up appeared to be quite a long queue for the lift between the overbridge and concourse levels.

On 20<sup>th</sup> October the queuing system used previously was not in use and there was chaos on the stairs to and from platform 5. Staff were available to help guide passengers to their onward trains and Virgin had a queuing system on the overbridge by platform 4. Tickets were checked at the barrier

### ***Manchester Piccadilly & Oxford Road***

On 18<sup>th</sup> October we found posters in place with details of the closure and the station PA had regular announcements as well. Unfortunately, and this is not

unusual, trains were described as running to Liverpool South Parkway with no mention of any onward travel arrangements.

At Oxford Road on 20<sup>th</sup> October trains were again just described as going to Hunts Cross with no information regarding onward connections. Posters with general information were in place.

### ***Quality of Service and Information on trains/buses & other stations***

TPE 09.07 Manchester Piccadilly to Liverpool SP on 18<sup>th</sup> October - the conductor gave details of the onward travel arrangements to Lime Street as the train was approaching LSP. Also on 20/10 similar information on a Northern train regarding onward buses as the train was approaching Hunts Cross station. Staff were on the platform there to help passengers up the steep slope to the station exit and on to the bus stop which was just a few yards from the station. Good quality bus with full destination display and helpful driver

Merseyrail service 18th October - On train announcements about city centre stations were clear and helpful (also on 20<sup>th</sup> October in the opposite direction for LSP) and at Moorfields staff helped passengers to find the Lime Street connections.

18<sup>th</sup> October bus from Liverpool Lime St. - a good quality double deck vehicle from Arriva with full destination display showing "Hunts Cross" with scrolling calling points below. The bus was well driven with a helpful driver calling out the stations as he approached each one. At Hunts Cross, staff were available to guide passengers to the platform for the Manchester train. At the station entrance, a one way exit/entry system was in use, although probably only needed during peak hours. No revenue protection duties were undertaken during the bus leg of the journey.

Liverpool Lime Street (Wirral line) & Liverpool Central – well signed and plenty of helpful staff (19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> October).

### ***Summary***

Overall impression was quite good showing improvements in key areas. The following could warrant more attention –

- Clearer and more helpful information and signage to buses, etc. at stations especially Lime St and LSP. But also at stations with through services to Liverpool including for example onward travel arrangements from LSP.
- Further attention to revenue protection.

John Moorhouse 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017