

*promoting quality public transport.....*

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## Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Forum held on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006 at the offices of MerseyTravel, Hatton Garden, Liverpool.

Brendan O’Friel in the Chair

### 06/3/1F INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed delegates and members of the public. He explained that what was the Public Transport Users’ Forum is now named TravelWatch NorthWest, part of a national network known as TravelWatch. The purpose of the organisation is to “fill the gap”, representing users of public transport who are not adequately covered by other organisations. It is independent, North West based and funded. He expressed thanks to MerseyTravel for sponsoring the Forum and providing the facilities. He welcomed both new members and those who had attended before.

### 06/3/2F ATTENDEES AND APOLOGIES

Those attending and those who tendered their apologies are listed at the end of these minutes.

### 06/3/3F MINUTES OF THE FORUM HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2006 IN LANCASTER

These were accepted as a true and correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

### 06/3/4F MATTERS ARISING

- John Owen raised the matter of the proposed CrossCountry franchise. An exercise had been carried out by Passenger Focus, with input from TravelWatch NW, with the result that there was significant negative reaction to the prospect of having to change trains at Birmingham New Street. Press releases had been sent to newspapers in the North West and the region’s MPs had been notified of the concerns expressed. TravelWatch NW also made representations direct to the DfT. Brian Johnson (VT) commented that “the matter will come to a head” in the next few weeks with further clarification of the franchise specification.
- Paul Fawcett noted that the Rural Transport Funding report is now available.

### 06/3/5F PRESENTATIONS

1. **Liverpool South Parkway (LSP)** by Mal Ferguson (MF), MerseyTravel. This was an update of the presentation at an earlier Forum at Manchester Airport.
  - The station, which has six platforms (4 main line and 2 on the MerseyRail Northern Line), was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
  - There are 5 bus stands plus 4 lay-over places and spaces for 16 taxis.
  - The Park and Ride car park can accommodate 240 cars and also incorporates a covered motorcycle stand. There is secure parking for 65 bicycles.
  - Provision has been made for a retail outlet.
  - Current rail services are: 2 per hour to Manchester Oxford Road, 1 per hour to Birmingham New Street and 4 per hour to Southport (via Northern Line). It is hoped to improve the frequencies and range of destinations during 2007.
  - Bus services cover all the south Liverpool area, with 9 per hour between LJI Airport and the station.
  - The station is fully staffed during hours of operation with security staff on duty throughout the night.
  - Information is provided by electronic and paper means.

- CCTV coverage is provided throughout.
- The station incorporates many sustainable design features including photo-voltaic cells (saving 1.5 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year), rainwater harvesting (saving 700,000 litres per year), geothermal heat pumps (to provide background under floor heating), recycled aluminium on the roof and FSC certified timber.
- The development was awarded the Innovation Prize by Network Rail.

## 2. Irish Sea ferries and public transport links by Dick Clague (DC), Maritime Correspondent.

- It was noted that in contrast to public transport systems on land there are no consultative/user groups for ferries in England and Wales.
- There are no route licensing arrangements, except in Scotland.
- There are no restrictions on the use of ports (except IOM), none of which (in N W England) are owned by ferry companies.
- Main types of ferries are: Ro-Pax (the most popular type, taking freight, cars and foot passengers), cruise ferries (only sensible for long distance journeys) and fast craft (mainly cars and foot passengers, very fuel thirsty).
- The majority of Ro-Pax services serve the needs of freight hauliers, resulting in timetables not always being passenger friendly.
- An overview of ferry services in the North West was provided:
  - Ø IOM Steam Packet Co - Liverpool and Heysham to Isle of Man.
  - Ø Norfolk Line - Birkenhead to Belfast and Dublin.
  - Ø P & O - Liverpool to Dublin (car passengers only, no foot pax). Also Cairnryan to Larne.
  - Ø Stena Line - Fleetwood to Larne (car passengers only, no foot pax). Also fast craft from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire and Stranraer to Belfast.
  - Ø Irish Ferries - Holyhead to Dublin (car and foot passengers).
- In addition there are tourist ferry services:
  - Ø Mersey Ferries - commuter services with leisure trips to supplement income.
  - Ø Wyre estuary (Fleetwood to Knott End) - currently suspended.
  - Ø Waverley excursions - seasonal coastal cruises.
- It was noted that passenger numbers on most routes are highly seasonal, with particularly high variations in foot passenger numbers on the IOM routes.
- Some companies offer integrated rail/ferry bookings but these are hard to find and are rarely available on the web.
- There is very little information provided by ferry companies about bus links to/from the ports.
- Pressing issues are:
  - Ø Need for better publicity about existing ferry links.
  - Ø Through ticketing and best prices.
  - Ø Onward transport links to final destinations.
  - Ø Consultation with passengers.

## 3. Discussion.

- MF responded to questions from the floor:
  - Ø The LSP park and ride provision is not used by airport users as overnight parking is not permitted. The possibility of an extension is being explored.
  - Ø The bus link is a commercial operation so it cannot become free (at least in the near future).
  - Ø Although the station appears to be lightly used, passenger numbers are as expected at this stage.

- Ø Pendolino trains will not be able to stop as they are too long for the present platforms, which cannot easily be extended. Negotiations are proceeding with many train companies for trains to call at LSP.
  - Ø It is important that passengers arriving at LJLA are provided with full information as to what travel options are available for their onward journey.
- On ferry matters DC commented:
  - Ø Fast craft are not as unreliable in winter as may be believed but in such circumstances they may not be very comfortable.
  - Ø It was agreed that Heysham station is not the most attractive (but it only caters for 2 trains per day).
- The Chairman concluded the discussion by emphasising that comprehensive information is most important so that prospective passengers may be fully aware of what is available.

A refreshment break was taken at this point.

#### 4. Regional Transport Strategy update by Dave Whyte, NW Regional Assembly.

- Key problems associated with transport in the region include:
  - Ø Peak congestion on roads and rail particularly around the major conurbations.
  - Ø Journey time reliability. The increase in rail passengers has created longer dwell times at stations, causing consequent delays.
  - Ø Concerns about the overall quality of rail services and infrastructure but acknowledging that there is little opportunity for major change in the near future. However it was noted that progress is being made in West Yorkshire.
  - Ø Some improvements, particularly in Merseyside, in security of public transport users.
  - Ø Concern about the environmental impact of traffic on towns, villages and the countryside.
- An outline of the regional transport strategy has been published on the DfT website. The examination in public will commence at the end of October. This will be in two parts with the public transport aspect being dealt with from 9<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2007.
- There has been general support for the following aspects:
  - Ø Support for public transport schemes being prioritised.
  - Ø Recognition that demand management (road pricing) is a key element in meeting challenges.
  - Ø Traffic management schemes designed to protect the environment.
  - Ø Support for cycling/walking routes.
  - Ø Conflict between the economic benefits of airports and their negative aspects.
  - Ø Encouragement of new developments close to public transport provision.
  - Ø The importance of regional ports.

#### 06/3/6F PASSENGER FOCUS UPDATE by Julie Warburton

- PF has made representations to the DfT about the proposed CrossCountry franchise proposals. Very critical of the intention to require passengers to change trains at Birmingham New Street. Summary document is available on the PF website.
- Leaflet has been produced advising passengers how they can obtain the best fare deals on Virgin West Coast services.
- Work has been done with BTP on improving passenger safety and security.
- Accessibility at stations has been investigated, not just for disabled passengers but also for those carrying luggage, push chairs, etc.
- Emphasising the need for consistency in the presentation of information. Not always user friendly.

- Involved in the Rail Utilisation Strategy consultations covering the North West and Scotland.
- Julie can be contacted at [julie.warburton@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:julie.warburton@passengerfocus.org.uk).

#### 06/3/7F TRAVELWATCH NORTHWEST UPDATE

1. **Community Interest Company (CIC).** Peter Robinson explained that the benefit of becoming a CIC is that it provides a legal status, important when funding from external organisations is being sought. Thanks were expressed to Chris Irwin of TravelWatch SouthWest for his help and guidance in moving towards the CIC. A document outlining the proposals was circulated with the meeting papers. Initially up to 12 directors will be self-appointed but will be subject to re-appointment at the first AGM when subsequent appointments will be for a 3 year period. Membership will be available to individuals and organisations. A membership application form was circulated. There will be no subscription. Financial liability will be limited to £1 per member.
2. **Annual Report and Business Plan.** John Moorhouse explained that there had been good financial support from the NW Development Agency, GMPTE, MerseyTravel and other organisations but future funding is by no means guaranteed. The report and plan will support applications for continued funding. John outlined the contents of the plan. The final version will be published in the near future and will be available for reference.

#### 06/3/8F MEMBERS' ISSUES

1. **Janet Briggs - Family and Senior Railcard anomalies.** Janet explained the problems that can arise when users of Family Railcards make one journey with the required number of children but return home alone (perhaps having left the children with grandparents). Some train managers overlook the situation but the passenger could be accused of fraudulent travel. This situation prevents such a family from making discounted journeys. This problem particularly discriminates against single parents who take their children to the other parent for an access visit. Generally, buying single tickets for a journey, to overcome the railcard restrictions, makes the overall journey very expensive. The reaction by many in this type of situation is to use the family car instead.

The problem is even more complex when the adult passenger holds a Senior Railcard. In the absence of a flat-rate fare for accompanying children it is also necessary to hold a Family Railcard. TOC specific arrangements do apply but these are worthless if part of the journey involves another TOC.

Janet suggested that TravelWatch NW explore this matter further to ensure that travel in these circumstances is a) affordable and social inclusive and b) attractive to users (as outlined in the TravelWatch Vision Statement).

2. **John Murray - Disability Discrimination Act.** John urged members of TravelWatch NW to encourage local authorities and TOCs to improve disabled access to transport facilities and services. He noted that there is a particular problem at Oxford Road station where the lifts are currently out of order, with the result that there is no access by disabled persons or those with heavy luggage or prams, etc. to the other platforms. After some lobbying the lifts are now being repaired. The advice previously given was to change platforms by taking a train to Piccadilly or Deansgate and returning to the correct platform at Oxford Road.
3. **Ian Watson - Concessionary fares.** Ian noted that the present provision of free bus transport for pensioners is confusing, with widely differing systems across the country. He suggested that TravelWatch members should lobby local authorities and the government to encourage a greater degree of clarity and evenness across regions. (The Chancellor announced that bus travel for pensioners will be free across the whole country from 2008 but no details have yet been announced.)

06/3/9F NEXT MEETING To be held on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007 in Crewe.

## PRESENT

Agate	Charles	
Barratt	Charles	Bus Users UK
Barton	Roger	Goyt Valley Rail Users Group
Boyd	Ian	Halton Borough Council
Briggs	Janet	North Cheshire RUG
Burns	Lilian	NW TAR (CPRE)
Burton	Les	Stagecoach Merseyside
Butterworth	David	Travelwatch NW
Clague	Dick	Maritime correspondent
Consterdine	J	CASPA
Crolley	Dave	World Ship Society
Cuff	Janet	
Dale	Chris	BUUK
Davenport	Dave	Merseytravel
Davies	Martin	Merseytravel
Elliott	Paul	North Cheshire RUG
Evans	David	BAFRUA
Fawcett	Paul	Travelwatch NW
Garrett	Tony	Wirral Transport User Assoc
Green	Cedric	North Cheshire RUG
Grey	Brian	Railfuture
Hollins	Richard	Lancaster & Skipton Rail User Group
Holmes	Chris	
Johnson	Brian	Virgin Cross Country
Johnson	Peter	TransPennine Rail Group
Kelly	Peter	MerseyTravel
Lamden	Mike	National Express
Lamkin	Peter	WBRU Assoc
Lunt	Tony	
Macfarlane	Andrew	Mid Cheshire RUA
Mawdsley	David	Skipton E Lancs Rail Action P'ship
McCluskey	Andrew	
McCulley	Steve	Railfuture NW
McDermot	Ian	North Trafford Rail Group
Miller	David	Mid-Cheshire Rail Users Assoc
Mitchell	John	WTUA
Moorhouse	John	Travelwatch NW
Murray	John	Rochdale Transport Partnership
O'Friel	Brendan	Travelwatch NW
Owen	John	Travelwatch NW
Pennyfather	Keith	Travelwatch NW
Price	Graham	NC RUG
Richardson	Malcolm	BAFRUA
Rimmer	John	Arriva NW & Wales
Robinson	Peter	Travelwatch NW
Spensley	Paul	Wigan Rail Users Group
Swallow	Ken	CILT (UK)
Thomas	John	WSS (Merseyside Branch)

Warburton	Julie	Passenger Focus
Warhurst	Russell	University of Chester
Warner	John	Kendal Bus Users
Watson	Ian	Travelwatch NW
Whyte	Dave	NWRA
Wrigley	Michael	STORM
Young	Tony	STORM

#### APOLOGIES

Allen	Bruce	Blackpool Borough Council
Antrobus	Aemma	NW Rail Campaign
Bell	Beverley	NW Traffic Commission
Bell	Peter	NW Bus Commission
Brookes	Simon	Network Rail
Cooke	Spencer	Hope Valley Transport Partnership
Easson	Andrew	North Yorks County Council
Field	Robin	CTC
Grange	Bert	Manchester Airport
Green	Leonard	CPT
Jennings	Derek	SELRAP/STELLA
Lappin	John	Government Office North West
Lucas	Paul	GMPTE
Oakes	Russell	CILTI UK
Potts	Colin	Copeland Borough Council
Reynolds	Christine	
Scoles	Alan	CPT
Threlfall	John	Blackburn with Darwen BC
Tripp	Roger	GMPTE
Young	John	Stagecoach

### TravelWatch NorthWest

*Supported by:*

*NorthWest Regional Development Agency; North West Regional Assembly; Merseytravel;  
Manchester Airport plc; Greater Manchester PTE; Stagecoach North West;  
TransPennine Express; Virgin Trains; Passenger Focus*