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## **NEWS RELEASE**

**Friday, 05 August 2011**

### **TravelWatch welcomes TransPennine Franchise Extension**

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) has welcomed the decision by the Department for Transport to extend the rail service franchise of First TransPennine Express until 1 April 2015.

“This makes a lot of sense”, said John Owen, a Director of TWNW, “because the extension to the franchise will take it forward to the date when it is expected that the lines served by TPE will be electrified and new fast electric trains will be available to operate the routes. It will also give a good timescale to operators and stakeholders to plan the needs for train services in the North West for the future”.

Lines served by TPE between Manchester, Liverpool, Preston and Blackpool are to be electrified in the near future to allow faster and more environmentally friendly train services and this will also see the introduction of electric trains on the Manchester to Scotland routes.

“TransPennine Express has been a success story from the beginning of its franchise 8 years ago and has set a high standard in customer care and train service planning, as well as achieving an excellent punctuality, reliability and performance level, and there is much that other operators could learn from them.” added Mr. Owen.

**ENDS**

***Further information:***

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