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NEWS RELEASE - Immediate

Wednesday, 15th August 2012

New West Coast Rail Franchise Operator must put passengers interests foremost.

TravelWatch North West, (TWNW), the independent passenger champion in North West England, welcomes the recent announcement by the Department for Transport naming the new franchise operator for West Coast. We want to work closely with First West Coast Limited to ensure passengers' interests are prioritized.

Chris Dale, Chair TWNW, said "it is imperative that no passenger benefits are lost because of the quest for cost savings to meet the high premium payments promised to the government. In particular Railcard holders must continue to keep the fares discounts they now enjoy at peak times and we stress that high priority must be given to retain and improve current facilities on trains - for example luggage space, toilet provision and catering. It is also important to retain and improve train service frequencies "

"To be fair First West Coast have promised improvements in these areas and we are encouraged by the commitment to reduce the cost of the shockingly expensive standard anytime fares by 15% in the first 2 years of the franchise. But of course the proof of the pudding!....."

TWNW looks forward to working with First West Coast Limited and being consulted on all matters affecting passengers.

ENDS

Further information: - Chris Dale, Chair, TWNW - 07948 551809

- John Moorhouse, Co Sec, TWNW - 07807 768124