

# TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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***Winner of CILT award for best practice in passenger transport (2013)***

***promoting quality public transport.....***

Transport Committee  
 House of Commons  
 London SW1A 0AA

17<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Dear Committee Members,

## **Trains fit for the future**

1. TravelWatch NorthWest is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in North West England. We are pleased to give our views to this inquiry.

### ***What role rail decarbonisation can make to the Government's wider commitments on air quality to 2040;***

2. We advocate total electrification as far as possible. We are not convinced of the viability of hydrogen trains. We understand from a UK Institution of Mechanical Engineers paper 'The future of Hydrogen Trains in the UK' that hydrogen trains must not be seen as a replacement for electrification as the hydrogen train needs 3000 watts of electricity to deliver 1000 watts of power at the wheel, while if the line is electrified the train only needs 1200 watts of electricity to deliver 1000 watts at the wheel. We regret the possibility of TransPennine electrification proposals having no electrification between Huddersfield and Stalybridge, necessitating bi-mode trains, though we do appreciate the engineering challenges. This decision could also have a huge negative impact on freight by rail, which in turn would mean more diesel-powered lorries crawling along the M62.

3. There may be cost benefit issues about electrifying more rural lines from a cost benefit point of view. Having diesel trains operating on the fringes of the network for the foreseeable future would be acceptable. Joined up thinking is essential.

### ***Whether there is adequate financial and other support from the Government for the of alternatively fuelled rolling stock;***

4. We have no comments on this.

### ***How the industry is responding to the challenge of a carbon-free transport future by 2040 and developing technologies to achieve that;***

5. As stated before we generally advocate electrification as the best way to minimise carbon emissions. There are currently many route miles currently served by diesel trains that would see patronage levels increase if electrified. See also our response below

***What challenges there are to deploying alternatively fuelled rolling stock on the GB rail network, particularly given issues with standards and loading gauge;***

6. We do not feel qualified to comment on this.

***What passenger benefits alternatively fuelled rolling stock could provide;***

7. This is not clear to us other than cleaner air in stations, etc.. The benefits of electrification are well documented including faster acceleration, quietness and a general cleaner environment.

***Whether alternatively fuelled rolling stock would be cost effective compared to EMUs over a 25-40 year life-cycle;***

8. See our response to the first question.

***What the train interior of the future needs to have to ensure continued growth in rail travel, particularly amongst young people and future generations and to be fully accessible to all.***

9. In today's railway structure there is no coherent strategy for investing in and promoting rail. We are simply not giving anything like enough attention to win people to rail in order to help combat climate change and protect the environment. For example, rail needs to attract many more passengers from internal air flights and roads to help lower carbon emissions, dependence on fossil fuels and relieve congestion. Incentivising travellers to transfer from air and road to electrified railways might well be a more effective way of "responding to the challenge of a carbon-free transport future by 2040" than any deployment of alternative fuelled trains. In order to achieve this, the need for more infrastructure is of course paramount but train capacity and design is also fundamental.

10. In our region and no doubt elsewhere, prospective passengers are (and have been for some time) discouraged from using rail because of full to capacity trains at peak times (and grossly inadequate car parking space at many stations). Train capacity, internal design (including seats matching up with windows), the provision of luggage space, attractive toilet facilities, accessibility and accommodation for mobility impaired users and cycle spaces are all major concerns for passengers. Sadly, on many services, these issues have for many years been subject to inadequate compromises often dictated by cost considerations. This is still regrettably the case with new trains - cost is dictating the policy of cramming more seats into coaches to the detriment

particularly of luggage space and toilet provision. Leg room is also a concern – the average height of a UK male has increased steadily over the years, with men, often routinely over 6 feet tall, unlike previous generations. However, much modern stock has poor leg room.

11. Whilst new trains, which are at last coming in in our region, are welcome, the issues spelt out above are of significant concern. A further disadvantageous example is that we believe the new trains for Northern Rail will comprise self-contained 2, 3 and 4 car sets with no end corridor connections. This is less flexible and convenient for passengers compared with most current designs running on Northern that have end gangway connections. The lack of gangway connections has implications for ticket inspection and any on train catering provision. Ideally more than one train conductor and catering unit will have to be provided on trains without gangways in order to maintain a proper level of passenger service.

12. Prospects for the future are not necessarily better. For example, we understand that **all** of the new trains for Northern mentioned above will have just one (accessible) toilet. This includes the 4 car trains likely to be used on the new Northern Connect services – really not adequate for these longer distanced inter-urban services.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond

Yours sincerely,

*John A Moorhouse*

John Moorhouse, Company Secretary