



PRESS RELEASE

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Call to address passenger dissatisfaction with the East Midlands Trains Liverpool-Nottingham-Norwich rail route

Local watchdog TravelWatch East Midlands, supported by Passenger Focus and responding to growing passenger concerns, today announced an enquiry into the operation of the Liverpool-Norwich route. The study will examine the extent of and reasons for passengers' complaints, and consider how these can be resolved. The study undertaken by a team including TravelWatch North West and local rail user groups will address not only current concerns but also future aspirations for this important link across the Region.

Stephen Abbott, Chair of the Steering Group says "the key issue would appear to be lack of capacity and crowding at peak periods, especially west of Nottingham. While East Midlands Trains has said that it will increase the number of seats as trains are refurbished, and that some trains will have additional carriages, this is unlikely to be enough to solve the problem".

East Midlands Trains won the new rail franchise from November 2007 on the basis of running the existing timetable with the same number of carriages, but as Stephen Abbott added "the Government (Department for Transport's) aim seemed to be to maximise the premium paid by the operator, without sufficient regard to passenger need. It certainly failed to cater for the passenger growth on this key route, which serves four regions and six major centres".

As a first step in our campaign we will produce a 'Liverpool-Nottingham-Norwich Manifesto' setting out:

- The short term commitments by EMT.
- Further improvements which could be achieved over the next few years given additional resources.
- The longer term vision for the route.

Abbott concludes "we hope that, with briefings in the various regions, this will encourage and facilitate lobbying by stakeholders along the route - for a far better service on this important inter-regional link".

Commenting, David Horne, Commercial Director for East Midlands Trains said:

"We understand the importance of this route to our passengers, and are keen to do the very best we can with the resources available to us. We see the development of Liverpool to Norwich services as a key opportunity for our franchise and we're keen to

work together with the wider community and stakeholders, such as TravelWatch East Midlands, to improve the service”.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

1. About the Liverpool-Nottingham-Norwich route

- The route is operated by East Midlands Trains (Stagecoach Group) as part of the East Midlands rail franchise which runs from 11 November 2007 until 1 April 2015.
- Trains generally operate hourly serving principal stations between Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, Peterborough and Norwich, and provide connections to many other centres.

2. TravelWatch East Midlands is an alliance of groups representing the consumer interest across all modes of public transport. The organisation’s aim is to represent the interests and concerns of public transport passengers across all forms of transport and to assist local and regional authorities’ work towards an integrated and seamless quality public transport network for the East Midlands region.

Website www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/

3. For further information contact:

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