



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**TRAVELWATCH**  
**East Midlands**

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2006  
Release: 06/024

**TravelWatch East Midlands – the independent body promoting passenger transport in the Region, today expressed disappointment at the announced the January 2007 fares increases, which hit the East Midlands particularly harshly.**

Whilst train companies are raising their regulated fares by 4.3% (inflation plus 1%) and unregulated fares by an average of 4.7%, the increase in East Midlands unregulated fares is even higher - Midland Mainline 5.9% and Central Trains 5.7%. This comes on top of the increase in many bus fares (e.g; Arriva – this week).

TravelWatch East Midlands Chairman, Alan Meredith said: *"This above-inflation price hike, on top of already high fares will be a poor New Year present for passengers – at the same time some East Midlands services are at risk from the planned new franchise"*

Passengers can't even depend upon the service, those using Central Trains are currently being faced with regular cancellations, particularly on Sundays. *"In today's 24-7 lifestyle, it's not unreasonable to expect a 7 day/week railway, Instead Central passengers are being asked to pay premium prices for second rate services"*

Passengers can still get relatively good value travel if they can afford a season ticket or can book in advance. However, trains are becoming fuller by the day.

*"However, passengers wanting flexibility or who have no choice about when they travel have no alternative but to pay the highest prices. – People are being priced off the railways, even off-peak, as prices increase and the "cheap offers" are harder to find."*

*"The future could be even blacker if the bidders cut corners in order to minimise their costs and win government approval to run the new franchise".*

**Ends**

**TravelWatch East Midlands** is the new public name of the East Midlands Passenger Transport Users Forum, an alliance of groups representing the consumer interest across all modes of public transport.

An independent body with nearly 300 participants from some 60 organisations, we have been grateful for the support of the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), Regional Assembly (EMRA) and local authorities. Our aim is both 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.

**TravelWatch East Midlands'** mission is to champion public transport so that it becomes:

- Accessible to everyone – including the mobility impaired
- Affordable and socially inclusive
- Available when and where needed
- Acceptable to all, whatever mode is chosen
- Attractive – with high quality of services and reliable information

By bringing together for the first time within a single body, representative groups of bus, rail, light rail, air and other passengers, **TravelWatch East Midlands** offers passengers a new opportunity for strong consumer representation and to regional policy makers a route to engage with transport consumers on an integrated basis throughout the region.

You can visit our website @ [www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/](http://www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/)

**For further information contact:**

- Chairman, Alan Meredith on 0116 2303895
- Secretary, Steve Abbott on 01858 466629 or
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***Promoting Quality Public Transport  
in the East Midlands.....***

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East Midlands***