



TRAVELWATCH
East Midlands

Promoting Quality Public Transport in the East Midlands

Review 2008-9 and Business Plan 2009-10

May 2009

***TravelWatch East Midlands** is the operating name adopted by the
East Midlands Public Transport User's Forum*

Introduction

It is now 5 years since TravelWatch East Midlands was formed (initially as a sub-committee of the then Rail Passenger Committee for the Midlands) to strengthen the voice of public transport users. With the demise of the RPCs in favour of a single national body – Passenger Focus – TravelWatch East Midlands is now the only independent, passenger-focussed body serving our region.

Our aim is “to make a difference for passengers”. There are many local passenger groups, especially those representing rail users and often passenger issues are common to many user interests. TravelWatch seeks to take such regional issues forward, ensuring that service specifiers and providers are made fully aware of passenger concerns. TravelWatch also seeks to identify best practice from the passenger perspective and to encourage it to spread between operators.

We aim to hold at least 2 public meetings a year at which significant issues for passengers are addressed by expert presentations and subsequent debate, although limited resources this year have restricted this to a single event. However, we contribute to the wider transport debate, producing evidence & reports to influence public transport provision. TravelWatch has a representative on many public transport bodies including the Regional Assembly Transport Group.

We also maintain a website @ www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk.

TravelWatch East Midlands is entirely dependant upon its volunteers and sponsors for both financial and technical support, but financial support has so far been linked to a specific project. We are particularly grateful for the assistance that we have received over the years from the Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency, Leicestershire County Council, Kettering BC, East Midlands Trains and East Midlands Airport.. We are seeking further sponsorship to enable us to take forward our work in the coming year.

We have an active Steering Group and I would like to express my appreciation of their support. Sadly Paul Fullwood of Passenger Focus will be standing down due to his recent secondment to run the bus project in the West Midlands, but we wish him well and are most appreciative of the guidance that he has given over the years. I would like to express our particular thanks to our officers, Steve Abbott our efficient Secretary and rail specialist, Roger Bacon our unassuming Treasurer has carefully garnered our well earned funds and Vice-Chairman Jim Froggatt for his support and wise advice.

In conclusion, having chaired TravelWatch East Midlands from its inception, I feel that it is now time to step aside and will ask the new Steering Group when convened to appoint a new Chair.

Alan Meredith
Chairman

1 Purpose and Objectives

- 1.1 TravelWatch East Midlands' aim is to promote accessible, affordable and attractive public transport serving the East Midlands Region.
- 1.2 Our vision is a public transport network that is:-
 - Accessible to everyone
 - Affordable and socially inclusive
 - Available where and when it is needed
 - Acceptable to all and
 - Attractive to users
- 1.3 We seek to achieve this by:
 - Representing the User viewpoint to transport operators and specifiers.
 - Contributing to the development of regional transport strategies
 - Undertaking evidence based research into areas of concern to public transport users and producing best practice reports based upon that evidence.
 - Working with local groups to give users a platform(s) for expression of their concerns and needs.

2 *Achievements and Outputs*

- 2.1 Given our limited resources, the year has again been busy and your Steering Group has met each quarter to guide the work of the organisation. We were pleased to co-opt Jim Bamford - Chair of the East Midlands Rail Forum onto the Group.
- 2.2 We have again been fortunate that a number of bodies including the East Midlands Development Agency, East Midlands Airport, East Midlands Trains Ltd and Kettering BC have each accommodated our meetings and we are extremely grateful for their continued support.
- 2.3 We continue to work closely with our member organisations and partners both regionally and nationally, bringing together like minded interests to represent the travelling public. In particular, our close working relationship with Passenger Focus' Link Manager, Paul Fullwood, on rail matters has yielded great benefit, hopefully for both organisations. Paul has recently gained promotion to head one of their bus trials in the West Midlands and will stand down from the Steering Group at the AGM, but we hope to continue working closely with Paul and/or his successor.
- 2.4 TravelWatch is currently represented on a number of groups including the EMRA Transport Group; EM Rail Forum; Greater Notts' Light Rail Advisory Committee; Notts' Bus Forum; EM Transport Activists Round Table; and the EM Rural Affairs Forum. We have also supported the activities of the Leics' & Northants Rail Action Committee (LANRAC). The Chair's of the regional groups also meet together from time to time and annually, with other national transport user bodies as a national TravelWatch Liaison Group.

2.5 Gov't and Industry consultations -

We have responded to a large number of industry and government consultations including:

- Allocation of train paths on the East Coast Main Line.
- New categories for minor rail closures.
- Network Rail funding 2009-14 (Nottingham area remodeling)
- Yorkshire & Humber Route Utilisation Strategy
- Options for strengthening bus passenger representation (DfT)
- Bus Service Operator's Grant (DfT)
- Services Eligible for the Statutory Bus Fare Concession (DfT)
- Market Study into Local Bus Services (OfT)

Whilst our focus is forward looking and strategic, we have responded to consultations by operators on such things as rail timetables and new investment and sought meetings when necessary, to raise serious issues

2.6 Station Travel Plans –

One conclusion of the work which we completed in the preceding year on access to and interchange at rail stations was that Station Travel Plans detailing means of access and onward travel might be a useful development. We were pleased therefore when two East Midlands stations (Derby and Loughborough) were chosen to pilot the DfT/ATOC project and have actively supported the steering groups for both projects.

2.7 Midland main line services -

Having pressed for an integrated single operator for the majority of our region's services, our emphasis has turned to the constraints upon improvement of that network. We welcomed improvements to the number, range and quality of services, including new stations at Corby and East Midlands Parkway, but remain concerned at the frequency at some stations such as Kettering and Loughborough and there remains much more to achieve. With regional partners, we continue to lobby, with some success, DfT and Network Rail for delivery of infrastructure improvements to bring these services up to modern acceptable performance.

2.8 Liverpool-Nottingham-Norwich route -

The new East Midlands Trains franchise has been constrained by inadequate rolling stock availability and quality, much of which is gradually being resolved, albeit more slowly than we would wish, but a major problem continues to be the inter-regional service between Liverpool & Norwich, particularly lack of capacity and crowding at peak periods. We have worked with the company and partners, pressing for additional rolling stock and a modification to the HLOS (High Level Output Statement) requirements which is currently being considered by DfT. We will continue to maintain our pressure until the issue is resolved.

2.9 Rail infrastructure planning -

We have contributed to stakeholder discussions and consultations on the RUS (Route Utilisation Studies) for the East Midlands, Yorkshire/Humber and West Coast Main Line.

2.10 Bus Passenger representation -

We will actively seek to work closely with Passenger Focus on both bus and rail, for example we agreed with Passenger Focus and Derby to represent passenger interests on the city's Strategic Bus Partnership. Whilst the East Midlands has not been chosen for one of the bus pilots, we will seek to work ever closer with David Sidebottom and the Passenger Focus bus team.

2.11 Concessionary travel

Whilst we responded to the consultation on the National Scheme and consider the outcome reasonable, we continue to monitor schemes in the region and via our website, keep passengers informed of local variations.

2.12 Temporary rail bus replacement.

As part of our day to day activities, we monitor, identify "best practice" & encourage improvement. Specifically, David Harby and colleagues reviewed the bus replacement during the Lincoln blockade and presented our conclusions to the operator.

2.13 Public Meetings.

We restricted our activities to one public event this year - **A fairer deal for East Midlands public transport users?** – sponsored by Leicestershire County Council, East Midlands Trains and Passenger Focus

Road congestion and public transport as an alternative to car use, had been the theme of our 2007 conference but subsequently,

- The transport authorities have decided not to proceed further with the "6cs" Study of congestion
- Nottingham planned to implement its workplace parking scheme and extend the tram system
- The new rail operators planned major timetable changes and
- They face problems with rolling stock availability/network capacity.

Given that good public transport services are vital to the economic and social well-being of our Region, we focussed upon how public transport in the region can be improved and considered why despite the increasing cost of motoring, public transport is still unattractive to many.

We were fortunate to have a strong and a varied group of speakers including: Barry Davies for the EMRA, Tim Shoveller - East Midlands Trains, Spencer Gibbens - Network Rail, Cllr Jane Urquhart - Nottingham City Council, Tricia Pedler – EMDA, Bob Hind –Arriva Midlands, Alex Veitch – ATOC and David Sidebottom of Passenger Focus.

2.14 Communications -

Contact with users, operators, specifiers and the public generally is important if we are to get over the case for better public transport. We put out press releases on important issues of policy and operation and maintain website <http://www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk>. Steering Group members are called upon from time to time to speak to the media (often at short notice) and we are appreciative of the efforts of Paul Clark in keeping this topical and informative.

3 Organisation

- 3.1 The full membership have the opportunity to meet at the annual general meeting and our public events, usually twice yearly, which address issues of concern in the Region, promote both best practice to operators and local authorities and development of forward-looking public transport policies across the region. Representatives of local transport authorities and public transport providers across the region are also invited to our public meetings and also our Steering Group.
- 3.2 TravelWatch EM is managed by a Steering Group, nominated from member and partner organisations. The Group meets quarterly to determine the activities, including the content and form of our public meetings.
(The forum's Constitution was adopted in January 2006 and a copy of which is available from the Secretary on request.)
- 3.3 Current members of the Steering Group are:

Alan Meredith (Chairman) Stephen Abbott (Hon Sec) Roger Bacon (Hon Treas'r)- Railfuture Jim Froggatt (Deputy Chair) – EMTAR Paul Fullwood – Passenger Focus Christopher Groome – LANRAC David Harby – Fed'n of Small Bus' Gyde Horrocks	Terry Kirby – CBT Leicestershire Louise McGuinness – Spalding & Peterborough Transport Forum Jean Needham – Railfuture David Thornhill – Notts Bus-Users UK and co-opted during the year, Jim Bamford – East Mids Rail Forum.
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Paul Fullwood will be standing down due to his recent secondment to run the bus project in the West Midlands.

- 3.4 The membership of TravelWatch provides a wide resource of expertise and advice which can be drawn upon to support some of its activities also.

4 Finances

- 4.1 Our accounts for the year will be reported separately at the AGM.
- 4.2 Unfortunately, we made a small deficit this year but still carry a modest balance, masking the underlying problem that is continually limiting our scope. Sponsors have again generously covered the costs of projects undertaken, but this has often been after we have started the project from our very limited balances. We have no source of regular income to cover our basic running expenses and consequently live from "hand to mouth" and cannot plan ahead as we would wish.
- 4.3 We are particularly grateful to Leicestershire County Council, Passenger Focus and East Midlands Trains for financing our autumn event.

5 Proposed Activities 2008-9

- 5.1 During the year, we aim to hold one or two public meetings, the first of which will be in October, but the main focus of our activities will be:

The changing economy

We will respond to developments in public transport contingent upon the changing economic environment to ensure a fair deal for the travelling public.

Fares and through ticketing

We will monitor regional fares for anomalies and urge operators to rationalise fares structures, wherever practicable, to eliminate these.

We will also consider the extent that operators facilitate through ticketing and support any expansion.

Rural services – funding and other long term problems

Areas of the Region are badly served by public transport, which has isolating effect on communities and individuals. This neither improves their economic circumstances, education or well-being, nor does it achieve such benefits for the Area. We will add weight to the lobbying of central government and regional bodies, drawing together best practice

Rail Timetable Reviews

We will continue to monitor timetables for shortcomings and anomalies and press for the best possible services within the limitations imposed by franchise agreements and resources available. We will take part in timetable consultations with the Train Operating Companies and monitor developments in Open Access rail services.

Liverpool – Norwich

We will continue to lobby in support of the region's campaign

An integrated Transport System

We see integration as a live issue. Specifically will look further

at rail / bus interface and connectivity, identifying "best practice" and raising concerns with those responsible. We actively support the current STP initiatives at Derby and Loughborough and see this, not only as tool for encouraging more sustainable travel policies, but a catalyst for improved public transport interchange.

Rail Infrastructure

We will, with regional partners, work to ensure that planned schemes such as the Midland Main Line journey time improvement are progressed in accordance with Network Rail's commitments for Control Period 4 2009-14. We will continue to take part in the development of Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategies - East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber and West Coast Main Line.

Strategic Cross Region and Intra-Regional Transport Routes, including bus and coach corridors

We will revisit our earlier work, including the "Jacobs study" and encourage operators and local authorities to develop and better publicise these links both across and to our Region (eg, Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds).

A Manifesto for Public Transport in the Region

We will seek to encourage debate upon the diverse needs of our region for acceptable integrated system of public transport and develop a manifesto setting out our views (see example – Appendix A.)

Concessionary Travel

We continue to monitor schemes in the region and via our website, keep passengers informed of local variations.

- 5.2 Given our limited resources we may need to prioritise further, keeping the least urgent under review and progressing as the need arises / resources permit.

Appendix A:

DRAFT Manifesto for Public Transport in the Region

The East Midlands Region has diverse needs for acceptable public transport but the principal requirements are:

a) **An integrated, “passenger focussed” network that is**

- **Accessible** to everyone;
- **Affordable** and socially inclusive;
- **Available** where and when it is needed;
- **Attractive** to users, with high quality of services and reliable information; and
- **Accountable** - with clear links from passengers to specifiers and providers.

b) **Room to breathe**

Passengers are entitled to civilised conditions but in many instances overcrowding is getting worse. We look for more frequent bus services, longer and more frequent trains and better, more spacious stations / interchanges.

c) **Travel with confidence**

Success in tackling crime and vandalism on and around public transport should continue, but we need action to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social conduct. This requires proper levels of staffing, good lighting, clean and cared for vehicles stops and stations.

d) **A Road Network that is fit for purpose**

Roads, signs and signals that are in a good state of repair.

e) **Travel systems which respect the environment**

Policies should be designed to encourage journeys (walking, cycling etc) which are energy efficient and minimise the adverse effect on the environment

AND

f) **Priority for buses**

To run reliable services, buses must be protected from traffic congestion and effort must continue in freeing up priority bus lanes.