

Minister confirms support for local initiatives to tackle congestion and praises TravelWatch

Press release by TravelWatch East Midlands

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Transport Minister Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP praised the work of TravelWatch East Midlands and similar voluntary bodies when she spoke at the conference 'Charging or Choice' in Leicester on Tuesday.

Hosted by TravelWatch East Midlands, the independent body promoting passenger transport in the region, the conference examined the problem of road congestion and how it can be resolved. "In particular, we were concerned that politicians should not just pay lip service to the need for fast and efficient public transport, but take steps to make it a reality," said TravelWatch East Midlands' chairman Alan Meredith of Rothley.

The Minister confirmed the Government's commitment to encourage and financially support initiatives such as the '6cs project' by the counties and cities of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, to find solutions to expected road congestion.

Survey reveals passengers' dissatisfaction with rail station

- Station car parks are full, despite being overpriced
- Some bus services are poor and stops badly signposted with inadequate information
- Cycle storage is insecure and badly planned
- Access on foot is inconvenient and sometimes potentially dangerous

These are just some of the findings from the TravelWatch East Midlands survey of rail passengers at stations including Market Harborough, unveiled at the TravelWatch conference on Tuesday (16th).

Part of TravelWatch East Midlands' ongoing campaign to improve bus and rail services, the survey, conducted in July, revealed dissatisfaction with the ease of access to many rail stations and may explain in part why people often prefer to use their car from door to door, rather than face a journey involving two or more methods of travel.

TravelWatch East Midlands' rail correspondent Steve Abbott said: "Rail and bus operators need to operate in a joined up manner, providing good connections, with information and help when there are delays."

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Notes for editors

1. The Rail Station survey was conducted for a full day in July at Derby, Kettering, Leicester, Loughborough, Lincoln and Market Harborough stations.

2. Speakers at the conference 'Charging or Choice?' included:

- Chris Austin – Director, The Association of Train Operating Companies
- Dr Nick Ayland – Integrated Transport Planning Ltd
- Kevin Belfield – MD, First Leicester
- Paul Fullwood – Passengerfocus
- Steve Abbott – TravelWatch
- Jonathan Goring – MD, CAPITA Symonds
- Sheila Rainger – Head of Campaigns, RAC Foundation
- The Rt Hon Rosie Winterton MP, Minister of State at the Department for Transport

3. 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. Its 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.

4. The organisation's website is www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk

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