



PRESS RELEASE

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"Accessing the Railway", a report just released by local transport watchdog *TravelWatch East Midlands*, reveals that many passengers in the East Midlands are dissatisfied by facilities at rail stations and that despite the increasing road congestion, motorists are still facing barriers in switching from car to rail.

The report - part of *TravelWatch's* ongoing campaign to improve bus and rail services - can be accessed on the News section of our website at <http://www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/publications/publications.html>. It is based upon surveys conducted last summer which revealed dissatisfaction with the ease of access to rail stations. It calls for more effort by operators and local authorities not only to improve rail stations, but to encourage greater use of public transport to get there.

TravelWatch East Midlands' surveys of rail passengers at Derby, Kettering, Leicester, Loughborough, Lincoln and Market Harborough stations revealed instances where

- Station car parks are full, despite being overpriced
- 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.

One suggestion in the report, the development of "station travel plans", has already been taken up by the Department for Transport and ATOC (the Association of Train Operating Companies) who will shortly announce a pilot scheme involve a number of operators and local authorities. We are hopeful that the East Midlands stations will feature in those pilots

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 if passengers are to be encouraged to switch to public transport."*

Notes for Editors:

1. About "station travel plans"

A travel plan is a strategy for managing the travel generated by an organisation, with the aim of reducing its environmental impact, typically involving the promotion of sustainable modes of travel (such as walking, cycling, public transport, car clubs and car sharing) as alternatives to single occupancy car use. The White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' (2007) suggested

that travel plans could be introduced at national rail stations, with the aim of improving station access and reducing traffic on the road network.

- **Current patterns of travel to stations** - The National Passenger Survey (NPS), which includes the London stations, shows that walking is the most popular means of accessing the station, with other public transport (underground, rail, bus/coach) also having a high share. Car travel accounts for 21% of passengers, while cycling has a marginal share at 1.7%.
However, individual station will have different figures and in the East Midlands surveys, the car is the most popular means of access, followed by walking (25%) and bus/coach (15%).
- **Business, environment and passenger benefits** - By promoting sustainable modes of travel to stations, travel plans could benefit the rail industry by increasing passenger numbers, particularly in the off-peak. This is because, as surveys have shown, many people are deterred from travelling by rail because the station car park is full¹.
- **Station travel plans could also benefit the environment** - If passengers can be tempted to try more sustainable means of travel to the station, or use rail for the bulk of their journey rather than private car, this will reduce emissions.
- **Passengers will also benefit** - Those who switch modes or share a car will reduce their expenditure on car park fees, while station travel plans could reduce congestion around the station, helping passengers access the station more quickly and reducing their door-to-door journey time.

Station Travel Plans will be valuable for Local Authorities, as they will help deliver objectives on improving environmental sustainability, and reducing traffic congestion, and can contribute to objectives on health improvement and social exclusion.

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:**

- Stephen Abbott on 01858 466629
 - Alan Meredith on 0116 2303895
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